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NATIONAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

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NATIONAL & SOCIAL PROBLEMS

BY

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TO

EDWARD SPENCER BEESLY

AND

JOHN HENRY BRIDGES

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NATIONAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The essential principle of modern society is to bring all political action under the control of moral duty.—COMTE.

INTRODUCTION

THIS book—being an appeal to international morality and a plea for social regeneration—develops the principles laid down in two preceding works: the first, on religious belief; the second, on philosophic thought.

In *The Creed of a Layman* I traced the growth of my own convictions from a theologic to a scientific Faith. In *The Philosophy of Common Sense* I dealt with the intellectual grounds on which a human religion must be based. The natural complement of these treatises is to show this system of philosophic religion in action. Let us observe its practical effect in moulding opinion on the great questions of Nations and of Society: on patriotism, international justice, government; and again, on problems of Wealth, of Labour, of Socialism.

Theology, absorbed in matters of Worship and hopes of Heaven, has no call to meddle with earthly politics, to offer counsel to secular rulers, or to

propound any scheme for reorganising society. Its kingdom is not of this world; and it seldom intrudes on worldly affairs without adding to the conflicts and the perplexities it finds. A human religion, on the other hand, is bound by its creed to preach a humane standard in politics, to work for a new earth, if it cannot promise a new heaven. It would belie its name and betray its truth if its first duty were not to show how the world of to-day might be made better, how a happier future here might be secured for our descendants; how international strife should be abated, and class wars merged in a moral and religious Socialism.

Accordingly, at the close of a long and somewhat active life,—a life entirely detached from any party interest or personal ambition,—I collect and re-edit a few of the essays which I wrote on various questions, national or social. The lightning reviewer may perhaps call them "ancient history"; for they concern periods before his own memory, of which he seldom reads in books. But these topics are not "ancient history" except so far as they deal with great events, whereof the consequences have to be faced still, for they form the burning problems of statesmanship in our own generation.

I do not hesitate to reissue studies that are thirty, even forty years old; for the same forces are still dominant and the same dilemmas are still unsolved. Vital problems concerning France, Germany, and Italy; our own problems in Egypt, South Africa, and India are as much alive to-day as they were in the 'sixties, the 'seventies, or the 'eighties. The errors, adventures, crimes of a previous generation are more in evidence than ever, grow ever more perplexing and dangerous.

The party politician who "has put his money

on the wrong horse," the journalist on the eve of a division who has had to defend or to denounce a minister, may well hesitate in after years to print the speech he made or the article he wrote on the spur of the moment.

It is a test of solid principles, whether on national or social questions, that they are not evanescent with every temporary crisis, but serve to explain the past as well as to guide the future. The lapse of a generation only justifies a view of events which had behind it principles and convictions maintained throughout a long life. I have found almost nothing to qualify in the judgment which I passed at the time on the great events and the dominant personalities of the nineteenth century.

The busy politician and the publicist of the hour is concerned with nothing but the question of the day; and he is impatient of any reminder of the controversies which took place when he was at school. But he cannot understand the present—much less can he settle its difficulties—unless he knows their origin and the inheritance of evils which they bear. The occupation of Egypt, the series of wars and of adventures this involved, remain still urgent questions. This goes to the root of the problem of Empire and its consequences. So do the long series of wars, annexations, and troubles in South Africa. So, too, the series of wars, annexations, imperial difficulties in India. I am well aware of the vast improvement effected in the material and administrative condition of Egypt. I do justice to the recent efforts made to heal the South African imbroglio. Nor am I blind to the splendid services of many able and patriotic men, at home and abroad, to grapple with the tremendous tasks that India has imposed on its conquerors.

All this is plain; and I am the last man to forget

it or to dispute it. But I see that the real dilemma of the Egyptian problem began with the occupation of 1882:—or rather long before, when governments became entangled in the financial and administrative enormities of the Egyptian tyrants. I trace the chaos and desolation of South Africa to similar follies and offences of imperialist demagogues. The blunders, extravagances, and crimes of our Afghan expeditions have been often repeated since, and raise the whole question of imperial expansion and imperial domination. Empire, alas! is not "ancient history." It is the insoluble ever-present problem of to-day in all our national affairs. And, as Empire is the real subject of the first Part of this book, so I am forced to illustrate my argument by referring to past events in Egypt, South Africa, and India—just as I begin by tracing the modern race after Empire to the sinister ambition of a Napoleon, a Bismarck, a Beaconsfield.

It would be idle to consider the state of France without tracing it to the evils of the second Empire, to consider the state of modern Europe without tracing it to the malign genius of Bismarck, to probe the evils of our own imperial craze without ascribing them to Disraeli and his pupils. A systematic analysis of Empire is bound to start with Bismarck, and to trace back our present difficulties to our dealings with South Africa, India, and Egypt.

These pages were all in type when the very important work of Lord Cromer appeared. It is a record of magnificent success in imperial administration and of patient statesmanship. But it reveals to a thoughtful reader the complex burdens which the occupation of Egypt laid on our nation; nor does it show that, in twenty-five years of prolonged effort, these burdens have been abated; much less how they are to be closed in the future.

The essays in this book all deal with the year 1882 —*before the occupation of Egypt began.* Why was that occupation a necessity to England, when France withdrew from it, and even sacrificed her great statesman? Why was it necessary "to crush Arabi and his party"? Why was England to involve herself in international dilemmas to enable speculators to secure their usurious dividends? The entire adventure of bloodshed and oppression falls back always on "financial interests."

I believe that these papers will prove useful as historical documents. They are the record of revolutionary and national upheavals in the light they appeared to a contemporary observer, who was also an eye-witness of tremendous events and in personal touch with some of the chief actors therein. Many politicians and most publicists are without any long memory of events and persons. They know little of what was stirring the world a generation or two ago, when they were at school. History they know from books. But of that intermediate period, a generation or two ago, they know little either from literature, or from memory, or from tradition. And yet the things which so keenly moved their own fathers are the problems and dilemmas which are left to them unsolved.

All this remains to them a blurred and often a distorted sketch. I invite them now to look at a few pictures painted at the time—in rather warm tones and in sharp contrasts of light and shade, it may be—but pictures which truly portrayed the alarms, the passions, the hopes, the enthusiasms of the hour.

Nor do I think these papers, old as many of them are, will be found by any serious reader to be stale reprints. Many of them were pamphlets and manifestoes issued by special societies, or circulated in quarters wholly unknown to the public of to-day. The essays which appeared in periodicals were published so long ago that

the present generation never saw them nor heard of their existence. Practically the whole of this book is new matter ; and I should be surprised if the reader should find any part of it familiar to him. It may astonish him to notice opinions of mine for which he may not have been prepared to give me credit.

I am neither a party politician nor a doctrinaire dogmatist. I profess myself bound by no man's *dicta* nor by any party watchwords. Trained in the general principles of Positivist sociology, I am ready to accept the opportunist aims of practical statesmen, when not in open conflict with moral principle. I have learned much in politics from Carlyle, Francis Newman, Bagehot, Michelet, Mazzini, Peel, John Bright, John Morley, Gladstone ; and in economics from Mill, Cobden, Spencer, Ruskin, Henry George, and William Morris ; but I profess myself bound by no man's school. Nor can I accept the current labels which it is the fashion to assume as party badges or to bandy about as party nicknames.

A Republican by conviction in the abstract, I am the reverse of a hidebound Democrat. With a deep loathing for mere Militarism, I could never join any kind of Peace Society. Ardent patriot as I am, I repudiate the tinsel Imperialism of blatant demagogues. With a hatred of all forms of race oppression, I stand clear of the Quixotic humanitarianism which clamours to rush into every case of national wrong-doing. I cannot call myself Radical, Whig, or Tory ; nor do I find such essential differences in the acts of any one of the recognised parties in the State. I have sometimes been called a Conservative revolutionist ; but I must give my own interpretation to any such term before I could accept it.

Nor on the social problems could I accept any one of the familiar labels. I am no Plutonomist, no

Individualist, no stickler for rights of Property and personal freedom from State interference. If a Socialist is one who looks forward to a reorganisation of society in the interest of the masses—what Comte calls "the incorporation of the proletariat into the social organism" —one who fervently desires such an end and labours to bring it about—then I am so far a Socialist. If socialism means the abolition of personal appropriation of capital by force of law, then I look on such a dream as the era of social chaos, and moral and material ruin.

If this seems to be a paradox, I hold it to be reconciled by the combination of Comte's two correlative laws.

(1) *Wealth is the product of society, and must be devoted to the interest of the social whole.*

(2) *Moral evils can be cured only by moral, and not by material agencies.*

This book, then, must be taken as a whole, and as a continuation of my previous works on religion and on philosophy. It is the mature and systematic belief of one who has taken the keenest interest in the political and social problems of the last fifty years, from no party or sectarian point of view, but with profound conviction in a general philosophy of society under the inspiration of a human religion. The key of all national and social problems lies in a human, moral, and scientific Creed. Their solution must justify the truth of that philosophy and the regenerating power of that faith.

PART I

The book, as the title indicates, is divided into two sections, distinct although in mutual reaction. The first Part deals with international problems, war, and imperialism. It inevitably opens with a criticism of German militarism and imperialism, begun more than forty years ago by the powerful statesman who, in two generations, has so deeply transformed the German people and so potently recast the politics of Europe. Modern imperialism and the militarising of nations dates from the accession of Prince Bismarck to power in 1862 ; and, as he was the founder, so he is to East and West, from Japan to the United States, the great exemplar of imperial expansion and the nation in arms.

That is the key, the *crux*, the type of all the inmost problems of our age. All serious political studies must start from the central movement of all—German militarism—which the Kaiser and his statesmen regard as a precious inheritance from the mighty founder of their Empire. Prince Bülow said in the Prussian House of Lords in a most memorable speech (February 26, 1908)—"the successors of Prince Bismarck owe it to the great Chancellor to continue the policy which they had inherited from him." There is the centre of European disturbance.

Thirty-eight years ago I warned our people and ministers that the Bismarckian triumph implied an entire recasting of international relations, and an era of military imperialism. I even pointed out as an inevitable consequence of this, the Pan-German ambition to found a new sea-power and to dispute with us our supremacy at sea. I do not pretend to discuss questions of fleets and of armaments ; and I join in no

scare about our maritime defences or in promoting the race to build rival *Dreadnoughts*. But I hold no one fit to argue any political problem who fails to see that the rulers and the people of Germany are bent on being able to meet Great Britain at sea on equal terms—not immediately, but within a decade or two of years at most.

This is an inevitable issue for German ascendency: from the point of view of German patriotism, a perfectly legitimate ambition. But the case of our two nations is not parallel. To Germany, with a small and most defensible coast but no colonies, a great fleet is a costly luxury, which can be used only for offence. To Britain, with its possessions scattered over the globe, its food and prosperity depending on transmarine trade, a mighty fleet—even a predominant fleet—is a necessity of existence as a nation whilst we hold a dispersed Empire. Our unwieldy Empire is bound up with our naval supremacy. Ruin that and you ruin their Empire is the deep conviction of German patriotism: and a very natural ambition it is.

It is not enough to be assured that the British fleet is equal to that of three powers, and overmatches that of Germany three or four times over. To-day that is true. But ten or twenty years hence things will be changed indeed. The whole German fleet is, or may be, concentrated in one of the most defensible positions in Europe—the mouth of the Elbe and the south coast of the Baltic—if not the mouths of the Rhine and the Scheldt. One-half—possibly two-thirds—of the British fleet must be elsewhere in East or West when there is prospect of a great war. Who can guarantee that, in the year 1920, a German fleet, concentrated in the Baltic and the German Ocean, and possibly with an ally, may not be able to overpower that portion of the British fleet which can be safely

withdrawn from guarding the Empire and protecting our supplies of food?

To work for that grand achievement in the future is the inheritance of Bismarck to modern Germany—to modern Europe. Bismarckian imperialism, which his successors acknowledge as a duty, implies the attempt. Not to-day—not to-morrow—not perhaps alone—and certainly not whilst Germany is isolated—isolated as a result of Bismarckism—and whilst Britain is rich in alliances and *ententes*. But alliances come and go like sunshine and storm-clouds. And our children may live to see black tempests gathering up in East and West, and the scattered Empire threatened within and without from many sides at once. Then will be the hour to challenge the naval supremacy of Britain.

For these reasons, the key of international problems lies in the organisation, the power, the ambition of German imperialism. And a serious study of European complications must start from that which I treat in the first essay—the Bismarckism which is what it was more than forty years ago—the menace and the trouble of European peace and progress:—a far greater menace to the very existence of our country than it was when Whig statesmen with tranquillity saw France overwhelmed in 1870.

It is idle to repeat to us that neither Germany nor any European Power has the least idea of attacking our country—now, or within the next five—it may be the next ten years. Nor could Germany or any other power dream of success, if they did. But politics are not a matter of to-day, nor of to-morrow—but of hereafter. When Kaiser Wilhelm started his naval programme on January 1, 1900, he said:—"*I shall reorganise my navy, so that it shall stand on the same level as my army, and with its help the German Empire shall attain to a place which it has not yet*

reached." When those words were spoken the German army was acknowledged to hold a supremacy in Europe. When the Kaiser's very natural, wholly patriotic, ambition is realised, and his navy has the same level of predominance as his army, the very existence of the British Empire will await his signal to break it up, and the independence of Britain will hang on the resources of our home defence.

Need I say that no man has a deeper admiration for the intellectual eminence of the German people, their great qualities, and their splendid achievements in science, in art, in literature, in municipal government—I will even add in military organisation and training. I know Germany from end to end. I have lived in Germany for long spells at different periods. I have watched her wonderful growth in many visits, from 1851 to the present time. I have German friends, and have the heartiest sympathy with all that is noble, intellectual, sociable in the German heart and the homes of the Fatherland. By education, by sympathy, by personal tastes, I am a strong pro-German still. But I cannot shut my eyes to the inner meaning of the imperial autocracy.

With the efforts of the day to secure an *entente* between our countries I can heartily join. By all means let us encourage good feeling between the two great types of the Teutonic race. Blood is thicker than water; and every Teuton feels the kinship in spite of political differences or rivalries. But the exuberant good-fellowship of journalists and savants is a passing mood—an artificial, shallow, and on one side a purely official movement. It has nothing to do with serious politics, with international policy, with the future of Britain or of Europe. Let us all cheer the genial and ubiquitous Kaiser. Let us embrace the savant, the artist, the poet of the Fatherland. But

let us keep our powder dry—and study the birth, the growth, and the future of Bismarckism.

Do I by this encourage any imitation of militarism; am I justifying imperialism for ourselves; am I playing into the hands of the Union Jack enthusiasts? Humanity forbid! My whole purpose is to point out the dangers, the evils, the tremendous responsibilities with which the Empire burdens our people and our generation. This monstrous, abnormal, polyglot, incoherent Empire is our white man's burden—our statesmen's dilemma, our cancer, and our curse. In the last essay of the first Part I explain what this means; and I show the grounds of political foresight, of moral principle, of religious feeling, wherein this conviction is based.

My memory, which goes back over the whole reign of the late Queen, forces on my mind the momentous change which during that period came over our country. From the time of Waterloo, and for a generation after it, England was foremost amongst the great Powers of Europe. At the opening of the twentieth century England was swallowed up in Empire. From being the dominant nation in the State system of Europe, it was translated into a nondescript World-Power. From a solid impregnable island, it had become an aggregate of unstable and disparate fragments. England-plus-her-colonies had ceased as a homogeneous State. We are now an Asiatic, African, American, Australasian hybrid. As an Englishman, I view with shame the effacement of Old England. As a patriot, I foresee the calamities in which its inevitable dissolution may involve us. As a reformer, I deplore the wasted opportunities, the protracted misrule, the social chaos it inflicts.

I am no "little Englander." I am an Englishman of the English, with British, Welch, and Irish

ancestors. And, for one, I am intensely proud of England with its thousand years of glorious traditions, down from the incomparable Alfred—the England which they now have smothered in cosmopolitan dependencies. I belong to a political school intensely patriotic, for on the walls of Newton Hall we inscribed as a sacred watchword the name of "Country." To those who taunt us with "the craven fear of being great," we retort with the finger of scorn at the low-bred pride of being big.

It is not merely the sinking of heart I feel when I find our ancient England besmirched into a mongrel Empire, when I listen to the blasphemous swagger of the imperialism of the canteen, when I think of all the waste in wealth, force, good men, engulfed in precarious adventures over the globe:—it is not merely a matter of degraded feeling and demoralised policy that stirs me. It is the bitter conviction that this *parvenu* Empire is doomed to early dissolution—is incapable of being made permanent or stable—and in the meantime is turning our political progress backwards, and may possibly lead us down into cruel ruin.

Nothing can ever make a nation out of a congeries of provinces, with every skin, creed, and type of man to be found on earth. And nothing can ever make the red patches tossed over the map of the planet a coherent State or even a colossal Empire. It is not a colossal Empire, but a patchwork bundle of conquests—not even strung together with a common civil and military system, but detached and as far apart as North Pole from the South Pole, as Central Africa from the Pacific.

Common sense tells us that units so heterogeneous and isolated can be held only by a nation which is "mistress of the seas"—*i.e.* by a people whose navy can overpower two or three navies combined. For

the moment that is the case. We have hitherto had but two possible rivals. We are now about to have two, if not three, more. Is the British navy for all time prepared to meet at once five or six nations at sea? I trow not.

It is true that at present there is no danger of any such combination, nor of any combination that Britain need fear. But who can predict the possible combinations of the next twenty years—even of ten years? Now, it is the inevitable effect of warlike supremacy by any one power to provoke an irrepressible rivalry to challenge it. Modern civilisation will not tolerate the hegemony of any one Power. All the jealousies, all the alarms, all the evils bred by the modern hegemony of the new Bismarckian Empire are being slowly but inevitably nursed against the maritime hegemony of Britain. It is childish to brag about overcoming this rivalry by sheer force; as if we could go on launching fifty *Dreadnoughts*, and could indefinitely maintain a "three-power standard," when the day comes that Germany and the United States, if not the yellow races, and the Muscovite races, have each developed a sea-power equal to our own to-day.

It is quite true—and I have just argued this very point—that supremacy at sea is necessary to our actual safety in our own shores at home, because with a home army of but 100,000 regulars at most, we could not sleep in peace within a few hours of the continental millions were it not for our invincible fleet. But that is no answer to our rivals. They say, "We have each of us to protect our own countries, and you might protect yours if you did not aim at being the predominant world-power. And we will tolerate no longer any predominant world-power."

The entire balance of power—the whole European State system—has been entirely revolutionised during

the reign of the late Queen. It is a material, intellectual, and moral change that has come over our kingdom. The home interests of England, Scotland, and Ireland have become secondary. Cosmopolitan adventures, interests, ideals, have become primary. Napoleon III., Bismarck, Disraeli, founded empires—of which one is extinct and the others are less than forty years old. Of all empires on earth, or even recorded in history, the British Empire, the youngest of all, is the most disjointed, incoherent, and disparate ever devised by man. All races, every skin, religion, manners, language, climate, ideal, people it—Negroes, Hottentots, Kaffirs, Arabs, Malays, Chinese, Hindoos, Greeks, Italians, Spaniards, Dutch, French—with their own languages, history, and law. The Court of Appeal administers thirty-two different legal systems or codes. All religions exist in it from Ultramontane Catholicism to the worst Negro-Fetichism—if not Devil-worship and cannibalism, or human sacrifices. All languages are spoken from the tongue of Shakespeare to the gibbering of Bushmen.

Is citizenship possible in such a horde? Is patriotism conceivable? Is settled government practicable? Can a crowd of scattered conquests be welded into a permanent state? Are these three hundred and fifty millions our fellow-citizens? Can a restless and divided democracy look to hold them down together for ever as mere alien tributaries? This kingdom has a history of one thousand years—the conquered dependencies hardly more than a century. On how many years more can we venture to count?—now that *dominion* has been substituted for *citizenship*—now that in place of a loyal union of free citizens we have a string of huge provinces held to tribute by armies shipped out and back in relays?

And the ballads they bawl out in the canteen tell

us how "big" it is! Is a man who weighs twenty-four stones a better man in private life than one of twelve? Is Russia, which reaches in a straight line for some 5000 miles, a match for an island of 500 miles? Is a man whose income is five millions a year as happy as one who lives on five thousand? Of all the coarse crazes of this age of "bounders," the pride in a "big" Empire is the worst invention of our cheap-jack literature. When Xerxes led his millions to Salamis, when Philip II. blessed his Armada, when Napoleon set forth to Moscow, their empires looked mighty till they ended in ignominy and ruin.

It is an inheritance of evil omen—a *damnosa hereditas*—incapable of being permanently held or yet of being suddenly quitted—rather a tremendous task to be gradually, fearlessly, wisely faced and reduced in time. To go on blindly increasing it, or maintaining it unchanged and unreformed, is the road to national ruin. Too long has Empire torn away our thoughts from all the evils and sufferings we have at home, from sympathy with all that is best and most progressive in our European neighbours, from ideals of a civilisation of peace and reform. It has plunged us into many a miserable war, and burdened us with a load of cruel and needless debt. Imperial pride is a sordid exchange for national patriotism. The imperial ideal is the vulgarising of our social life, the stifling of our national development, and the distortion of our political energy. Whilst we are pretending to Christianise the barbarous East and the South, we are leaving moral and social barbarism to breed at home. To add ever new provinces to the red map of Empire is to pile fresh burdens and dangers on these islands of our forefathers. To find careers for a hundred thousand well-born youths is to close our ears to the just demands of the forty millions we neglect.

PART II

Just as the tremendous responsibilities of our amorphous Empire are the *crux* of our National Problems, so the upheaval of the Industrial order is the most urgent of our Social Problems. It is a question wherein, for some forty years, I have had a keen interest and have taken some slight part. For sixty years at least the claims of Labour to have a larger share in the control of the State and in the proceeds of their toil have been continually shaking the world of politics and also of economics. And now both worlds are confronted with the far-reaching, indeterminate, elusive social revolution known as Socialism.

With the deep and ever-growing uprising of all civilised workmen—and indeed of all men of clear thought and generous feeling—against the injustice and the abominations rife in our industrial system, I have been through life in complete sympathy. And in the attacks upon our vicious economic world I find little to dispute—be these in the critical side of books by Henry George, Karl Marx, the Fabians, or the Social Democrats. I wholly and ardently agree with them that this earth will not be a home worthy of civilised man until there has been a root-and-branch social revolution to reform the daily lot of the vast working majority of our fellow-citizens.

But when we pass to their reconstructive schemes I can see little but sophisms and passionate dogmatism in the random crudities which pass as Socialism. These vague Utopias swallow up each other; and if applied in practice would swallow up society and civilisation together.

There are eight main grounds whereon the shifting

phantasmagoria called Socialism would be disastrous and futile :—

(1) Social regeneration could only be sound and lasting if it took account of all the sides of man's social life—intellectual, moral, domestic, artistic, and religious.

(2) A panacea of society which took account of nothing but Labour could be nothing but a sordid kind of materialism.

(3) Modern Industry could not be maintained—much less developed—without rare individual genius and no less rare personal energy.

(4) Such special genius and rare energy can only be secured by personal freedom and the untrammelled initiative of gifted individuals.

(5) To suppose that industrial genius and personal energy can be hired by the mass of the manual labourers is an ignorant delusion.

(6) Democratic government is at best a poor makeshift for ruling the State; to apply it to Industry could end in nothing but material ruin.

(7) The personal control of capital is not only the very condition indispensable to Literature, Art, to all Improvement, physical, moral, and æsthetic, but it is also the essential field of some of man's noblest and most generous qualities.

(8) To subject industrial life as a whole to the democratic rule of the manual workers would be a tyranny which would crush improvement, art, thought, and freedom, and would speedily bring this island first to collapse, then to starvation, and ultimately to subjection to a foreign conqueror.

(1) In the essay on *The Limits of Political Economy* I sought to expose the essential narrowness of the orthodox Plutonomy in fashion in the 'fifties and the

'sixties by showing that the pretended *science* was usually hypothetical reasoning from quite narrow data. I believe the essay to be one of the earliest systematic attempts to shake the mischievous fallacies of the orthodox economists. The "dismal science" has now lost its vogue; but I reissue my criticism of its hollow dogmatism because most of the argument applies *mutatis mutandis* to the current fallacies of Socialism. The "orthodox" economists of a former generation constructed a spurious code of industrial axioms on the cynical assumption that all men acted on the instigation of their material interests.

The Socialism of to-day, however much its advocates differ in method, starts with a similar false assumption, viz. that all the men should be forced to live in the ways their neighbours shall direct as most useful to the convenience of the masses. This cognate fallacy has no immoral basis, it is true. It even exaggerates an eminently social desire. But, as it rests on the crude doctrine of material democracy, and neglects all the nobler sides of social life, it would result in paralysing society and in the end bring about an industrial chaos.

In the first essay of Part II. I have analysed the human motives and ideals of life which Plutonomy neglected as useless and inoperative in social life. Almost every word of that argument may be applied to most of the current types of Socialism which have nothing to say or to teach about all the nobler and purer forms of human energy, which destine society to the mechanical task of working up raw materials, and satisfying the common bodily wants of mankind. Loose generalities which some Socialists fling, as crumbs from the laden tables of Labour, to Art, Philosophy, Religion, moral and scientific Education—to all that makes up complex civilisation—these empty phrases count for nothing in their Utopias. A true and

sincere Socialism must reorganise Society from top to bottom in all the manifold and subtle phases of man's Social life, as ever was seen in the varied Past or as ever is imagined in the Time to come.

(2) That miners, spinners, and masons should be fascinated by such childish sophisms as that "all wealth is produced by the manual workers"; "that the entire product of Labour should be handed over day by day to the labourers"; "that wealth is criminal in itself"—that such nonsense should be listened to eagerly by men bowed down by the cruel conditions of modern toil, is not so strange. But that men who pretend to speak with culture of mind and authority to teach should preach such wild stuff is a sign of the mental chaos of our age in the break-up of all systematic convictions.

The whole of the second Part, and especially the essays on *Co-operation*, on *Social Remedies*, and the last, on *Moral and Religious Socialism*, discuss these fallacies. Manual Labour, left to itself, could produce nothing; and, but for scientific leading and the resources of Capital, would only waste its labour and destroy good material. If the whole product of Labour were paid out to the labourers there would be no accumulation, no capital to start fresh work, and soon no means of working at all. "Wealth" is no more a crime than Labour; for human society can only exist by the co-operation of both.

(3) The crudest of the fallacies which mislead unfortunate toilers for wage is the dream that great industries could be managed by popular elections, committees, and officials chosen by the votes of the mass. A great factory, a railway, a bank, could no more be run in such ways than Raphael's *Transfiguration* could be produced by a gang of house-painters, or *Hamlet* have been composed by the printers of *The Times*. All industry rests on individual concentration,

personal genius, stores of accumulation, and then on masterly rapidity in action. Napoleon's victories "were won by half-an-hour." Industrial victories—even industrial success—are likewise the prize of rapidity, secrecy, inspiration, command of large reserved capital—and above all of freedom. Battles are not won by councils of war—much less by the shouts of whole battalions of Tommy Atkins.

All this has been elaborately worked out in the essays of Part II. on *Co-operation* and *Social Remedies*, and need not be discussed any further. I merely now state my conviction that the Marxian scheme of economic revolution, rigidly enforced in Europe, could result in nothing but such desolation as fell on it when the Roman Empire was broken up by the Northern tribes. And, if enforced in our own country, would end in a few months in general starvation, owing to the stoppage of our foreign food-supplies, through the destruction of credit, of mercantile skill, and of efficient management of the material necessities of life.

(4)-(8) The other inevitable results of real Socialism are discussed in the second Part of this book; and in the essays on *Social Remedies*, in particular, some evidence is given of the incalculable services to society which large capitals continually afford, but which could not be replaced by any administrative or democratic machinery. If Democracy ever did get into its hands the collective Capital of the community, it would soon prove itself to be the most close-fisted, cruel, and grasping Capitalist of all.

This book does not undertake to expound in detail the social reorganisation which it would substitute for the existing economic tyranny. This is sketched in the leading ideas to be found in the concluding essay on *Moral and Religious Socialism*. It is, in fact, the

subject of the whole of the volumes of which this book is the continuation, as it is indeed the real subject of almost everything I have written since I accepted the social and religious scheme of regeneration that the nineteenth century owed to Auguste Comte. We also are Socialists—but Socialists with a difference—that whilst working for an entire reorganisation of industrial life, we will not cease to work for the far more vital reorganisation of moral, intellectual, religious life. Without this, the pretended reorganisation of industrial life, by the violent confiscation of personal capital (for "compensation" is an idle and mendacious phrase—) this is a suicidal, and most immoral, delusion.

There will be found here no attempt to discuss, what are so often mistaken for real Socialism, the current schemes for the State acquisition of railways, of mines, of ports and docks, of large tracts of land, or of banks; for the State control of all academies and schools; for the feeding of school pupils; for old age pensions; for the support of the poor and helpless; for an Eight-hour Day—or a Seven-hour Day; for a minimum wage; for a revision of the Suffrage; for a reduction of armaments; or for the reorganisation of local government; and generally of the whole parliamentary and imperial system.

It is a mistake to call these schemes Socialism. Many of them are now begun or advocated by reformers of all schools. The present writer would be heartily in favour of gradually introducing any or all of them with due consideration of the practical advantage of each scheme in its detailed form. Each proposal has to be considered by practical statesmen on its merits and on its proven efficiency. It would be a mischievous dogmatism to resist them as mere Socialism; as it is a fallacy to regard them as real and

effective Socialism. The Socialism which was brought over here from France and Germany, which was propounded by Proudhon, Lassalle, and Marx, is a very different thing. It is a form of Communism, essentially based on the annihilation of personal ownership of Capital in any form—the annihilation in the early future of the Family, and ultimately of Civilisation—because it applies a rigid and dominant democracy to material life alone, blind to all life, domestic, moral, intellectual, and religious.

To that we oppose a Socialism, economic, moral, and religious, whereby the reorganisation of Society as a whole will be secured by a new ethical and religious education, entirely reforming the spirit in which Capital, the product of society, shall be used, enjoyed, and controlled for the good of Society alone.

PART I

NATIONAL PROBLEMS

I

BISMARCKISM: THE POLICY OF BLOOD AND IRON

(*November* 15, 1870)

The following Essay was written during the great Franco-German War in the middle of November 1870, after the surrender of Metz and the armies of Napoleon III. and of Bazaine. Trochu, with 400,000 men in arms, was still holding out in Paris, and the Republican Government was still at Tours with several armies in the field. At that time English sympathy, at least in the Army, in the Conservative press, and in the working classes, was being turned in favour of the French defence. The writer, who had been strongly opposed to Napoleon's mad invasion of German territory, was full of indignation at the mode in which the war was being carried on by Bismarck. He had been on the Continent and through Germany during August, September, and October. And he foresaw the consequences to England and to Europe of submitting to Prussia becoming the dominant power on the Continent. The Essay must be read as the passionate protest of one who was then labouring to rouse English opinion to give some assistance to France. It is reprinted without modification as it stood in the Fortnightly Review, *December 1870, vol. viii., then conducted by Mr. John Morley. The writer reproduces it because it is as true in essential principle as it was at the time,*

because the evils then evident, and the consequences then foreseen, are again in some degree imminent to-day. The writer never was a doctrinaire "pacificist," as it is the fashion to call those who deprecate the huge war preparations of our age. But he has ever been a convinced opponent of Militarism. With all his admiration for the genius and energy of the German people, he still believes that the real cause of the unrest of Europe is to be found in the system of ascendancy by armaments, founded by Bismarck and continued by his successors (1908).

"*It is desirable and necessary to improve the social and political condition of Germany; this, however, cannot be brought about by resolutions and votes of majorities, or speeches of individuals, but* 'BY BLOOD AND IRON.'"—COUNT BISMARCK.

TREMENDOUS as is the drama which we have been watching breathless in Europe, we have seen as yet but its opening scenes. The crash of the most gigantic battles known to history has deafened our senses to the political movement. We have been brought, as it were, in the flesh, close to these onslaughts of two nations. We have almost heard with our ears the cries of triumph and despair. We have almost seen with our eyes the grappling of the combatants. We hold our breath in the crisis, feeling passionately, some with one, some with the other, fighter—as if we were watching gladiators in an arena.

It would be well to look at it more as politicians, and less as spectators. This great struggle concerns the welfare of Europe and of England; it is our own future and peace that are at stake. Let us consider what may be the consequences to civilisation, and not regard it merely as a grand study of national character or some stupendous experiment in modern science.

It is, after all, not entirely a matter of sympathy with this or that type of race. Nor does it turn altogether on this or that quality or institution in one people or the other. Our mere sympathies have their place; but it is high time to face the political issues foreshadowed. And whilst the crowd of the amphitheatre, ever siding with force and success, turn down their thumbs, and cry "*Habet! Habet!*" let us ask, What may this contest be preparing for Europe?

It is pitiful to hear the grounds on which the issues at stake are so often decided. An anecdote about a *landwehrman*, or the tone of a proclamation, seems to some people sufficient to determine the right and wrong in the greatest of modern struggles. Frenchmen have given utterance to much unwarrantable language about the "sacredness of French soil," "Paris the city of the world"; the peculiar and special sanctity of a republic, and the enormity of assaulting the Capital. Count Bismarck never said a truer word than this, that the honour of France is of precisely the same quality as the honour of other nations. To besiege Paris is what it would be to besiege Berlin, if it were fortified. To bombard Paris is no greater outrage than it would be to bombard London. The laws of war certainly do give the right to shell a fortified city. And the annexation of two provinces is not to be counted as a crime merely since it is done at the expense of a republic.

Nor is the nonsense wanting on the other side. The familiar picture of the German soldier, with the inevitable three children at home, writing letters to his wife between the pauses of each battle, and studying his pocket copy of the Vedas on the outposts, is striking; but it is not decisive on a question of boundaries. Pious ejaculations to extirpate the immorality of France sound strangely from men

reeking from the gambling hells of Baden and Homburg, and the stews of Hamburg, Berlin, and Vienna. The fact that the educated classes are serving in the German ranks is not incompatible with the opinion that the nation is disordered with military ambition. The German troops may be learned in every modern and ancient tongue. Does that lessen the danger of a vast military empire? The German armies may be the "nation in arms." But have invaders in any age—did Tilly or Attila himself strip a people more utterly to the bone than they have stripped the east of France? These fathers of families and model husbands can burn down villages on system, set fire to farmhouses with petroleum, massacre civilians in cold blood by superior order, and use substantial citizens as buffers on their railway trains.

There is so much of the overgrown schoolboy in the English world, that great political movements are judged by the childish rules of the playground. People need to be reminded that there is something in politics more profound than the motto of a "fair field and no favour." "They would fight, and they must fight it out," says one. "The weaker is beaten, and must pay the stakes," says another. "France began it," says one. "Germany drove her to it," says another. "The French are a nation of liars," cries one. "The Germans are such brutes," replies his neighbour. All this is the schoolboy view of the war, just as thousands of people took the side of slavery in the American civil war, because they said the Yankees bragged and the Southerners were descended from gentlemen.

Now what we want is a political view of this war. A question like this is not a law-suit, nor is it a personal quarrel. It concerns the future well-being of Europe. Speculations into the real origin of the war are worse

than useless. They are like discussions on the origin of evil. At the same time some short account of the basis, as it were, on which the present argument rests, may be almost indispensable.

It is quite plain that for generations, throughout the political and literary classes of France, loud and arrogant voices had been continually raised for the frontier of the Rhine. There is no proof whatever that these disgraceful appeals could ever have moved the body of the French nation to an aggressive war for its possession. But the aggrandisement of Germany, and the formation of a vast military power by her side, undoubtedly filled France with a fever of jealousy and fear. The jealousy of German unity was both insolent and foolish, and deeply disgraces the French name. The fear of the German military organisation, if hardly worthy of a great nation, was not unnatural; and if we look at the professional cravings of the German chiefs, quite excusable. There happened to France what would happen to England if France by a war of aggrandisement had seized Belgium and Holland, had doubled her naval strength, possessed a chain of great arsenals along the northern coasts, and had acquired a fleet of ironclads in the Channel far superior to that of England, with the avowed purpose of disputing her maritime supremacy. There can be no doubt that England would have seized the first opportunity of bringing the struggle to an issue; and every second Englishman would have been saying, "Better to fight it out at once." This is precisely what France felt towards Germany.

But although the professional classes in both nations were equally prepared for war, in both they were kept in restraint by the good sense of the peaceable mass of the people. And there is not the smallest reason to

suppose that either the French or the German people would deliberately have chosen a war of conquest. It is this which makes the war peculiarly the crime of Napoleon and his civil and military abettors. Large classes of French society wantonly supported him, and before the opinion of France could make itself heard, she was hurled into war. The French people as a whole had no voice or part in the matter. And all the efforts of the préfets could not wring a show of assent. It is utterly untrue that either they or the citizens of Paris advocated war. The writer saw a letter written by a very able observer from Paris (one who is now at his place on the ramparts) during those days when Pietri's hirelings were shouting through the streets, "*à Berlin!*" "Paris," wrote he, "est morne et silencieux." And even the Government never pretended to make, and never dreamed of making, this a war for the Rhine frontier. A victory, the shadow of a success, and a plausible ground for peace, was all that they dreamt of. An atrocious project in itself; one in which the French people suffered itself to be involved, and one for which the French people have paid a terrible price.

In this state of things the war began, and no one desired more earnestly than the present writer that the Germans might repel the iniquitous invasion, and destroy the military power and prestige of the Empire. No one rejoiced more than he did over the crushing completeness with which this was done. The gain to civilisation in the extinction of Napoleonism, and of the wretched impostor in whom it has ended for ever, in the disgrace which has covered the corrupt army he had created, is almost a sufficient compensation to France and to Europe for all the sufferings of this war. It is therefore with no blind partiality for France that this question is here discussed.

But the matter for us is this—What does all this portend to Europe? It is of little use to weigh out the relative measure of guilt in either Government, or the degree in which their people participated in it. The German leaders have passed from the task of defence into a career of conquest. They have now thrown off the mask, and no longer contend that they are continuing the national defence. They no longer even pretend that they are fighting for territory. They are fighting now (November 15) solely for the military point of honour—the taking of Paris. As the *Times* correspondent at Versailles told us, the King would grant no armistice; for every Prussian soldier had but one fixed idea—to enter Paris. That is to say, the Germans are now fighting for military glory. It is for this they are desolating France and distracting Europe.

We have protested so fiercely against the military ambition of France, that we have come to forget there is such a thing as military ambition outside France at all. But what is Prussia? The Prussian monarchy is the creation of war. Its history, its traditions, its ideal are simply those of war. It is the sole European kingdom which has been built up, province by province, on the battlefield, cemented stone by stone in blood. Its kings have been soldiers: sometimes generals, sometimes, as now, drill-sergeants; but ever soldiers. The whole state organisation from top to bottom is military. Its people are a drilled nation of soldiers on furlough: its sovereign is simply commander-in-chief; its aristocracy are simply officers of the staff; its capital is a camp.

Nowhere in Europe—not even in Russia—has the military tradition and ideal been sustained in so unbroken a chain. Prussia Proper has been the only European State organised on a military basis as com-

pletely as any State of antiquity. In the words of the *Edinburgh Review*, "No nation since the Roman has ever devoted itself so wholly to the development of the military side of the national life." And this is true. Let it be distinctly understood that this is said of Prussia only in its political, or rather its *international* aspect. The writer is the last person to forget the splendid intellectual, artistic, and moral achievements of Germany; the high culture, and noble qualities of individual Germans; their industry, energy, and devotion to education. All that is not here in question. What is meant is that in her international relations Prussia is a nation resting on a *military* basis. Prussia in a distorted way is the Rome of modern Europe—a brave and energetic race giving their whole national force to war, and steadily conquering their neighbours step by step. The notion of the Prussian army being simply a militia of citizens fighting for self-defence is an idle figment. Let one test suffice. Prussia, or rather Prussianised Germany, has suddenly thrown into the field at least 800,000 men, possibly 1,000,000.

Grant that these are mostly armed citizens. If there is one thing in this war certain, it is that this vast host, the largest which has ever been gathered under one head in Europe, has been led by highly trained professional officers, equipped with an adequate commissariat, provided with gigantic siege and train appliances, aided with the most scientific engineers, and directed by the most accomplished staff that has ever taken part in war. Now what does this imply? It is this — that highly trained leaders for 800,000 men in every branch of the scientific uses of war are not the creation of a militia, are not made in a day, but in themselves prove a devotion of the national power to war as a profession far greater than exists in any people in the world—far greater than ever has

been regularly organised since the palmy days of the Roman Republic.

We hear much of the Chauvinism of the French army and military class. No language can be too strong for it. It is odious; and France, even in passing through the fire, is well freed from the curse of France—its own army. But that Chauvinism—the mere insolence of the soldier—which is the curse and shame of France, has not tainted the mass of the people. The French peasant, and still more, the French workman—that is to say, nineteen out of twenty Frenchmen—look on the soldier's professional arrogance with loathing. To the peasant the army represents the blood-tax, to the workman the instrument of the tyrant. And thus Chauvinism in France, with all its shameful attributes, is a cancer in French society, but is not its bone and sinew.

We never hear of the Chauvinism of Prussia. What may be the reason? Perhaps that the whole nation is so penetrated with a faith in military qualities —Chauvinism, in fact—that it finds no distinct type. In Prussia the professional soldier makes less noise—not because the professional soldier is so alien to the rest of society, but because he is so much akin to it. Every Prussian, in one sense, is a professional soldier; and as a matter of course adopts the soldier's creed, ideal, and morality. No one can doubt that the German is a brave, strong, self-reliant, acute, and calm man. It is in all the individual virtues a grand and large type of human nature. The German soldier is conspicuously, and even nobly, free from gasconading. He very, very rarely brags. A fine quality; but there are others necessary to a social being. And a man may disdain to boast, be brave and self-possessed, and yet be overweeningly proud of his brute force, and determined to exert his force

without—from the social point of view—mercy, shame, or conscience. And such a man is the professional Prussian soldier.

What, for the last generation, has been the history of the monarchy of Frederick in its international relations? Two wars of conquest against Denmark; a war of conquest against Southern Germany; bullying Switzerland; bullying Holland; oppression in Schleswig; oppression in Posen; oppression in Hanover, Saxony, Frankfort, Hamburg. We quite forget that that history of the destruction of the old German Confederation is a perfect tissue of violence and fraud. Spoliation more arrogant, and chicanery more shameless, have never been seen in Europe in modern times. The Prussian deals with the weak in Europe, as Russia deals with the Turk, as Europeans deal with Asiatics, but as no other people in Europe deal with a Christian neighbour. In Prussian politics alone the very germ of international morality is wanting.

Unhappily this gospel of the sword has sunk deeper into the entire Prussian people than any other in Europe. The social system being that of an army, and each citizen drilled man by man, there is (out of the working class) no sign of national conscience in this matter. And the servile temper begotten by this eternal drill inclines a whole nation to repeat, as by word of command, and perhaps to believe, the convenient sophisms which the chiefs of its staff put into their mouths. I purposely here and elsewhere speak of Prussia, and not of Germany; for it is Prussia alone which is regularly organised on a military basis.

We hear much of the Napoleonic legend. But there is such a thing as the Hohenzollern legend; and one of the sophisms which Germany repeats is the worship, as of a great modern ruler, of a king who, even in his own eyes, is a sort of imitation

Czar. One of the most laughable of these sophisms is the notion that the German is a mild, peaceable, and stay-at-home creature, utterly inoffensive, and never resorting to arms except in urgent self-defence. Really the "mild German" reminds one of the "mild Hindoo." It is entirely forgotten that individual is a very different thing from national character. And the quiet or jovial Hans of his own fireside, under a complex set of national institutions, becomes, as the unit of a nation, one of a conquering people. Nothing can get over these facts: that the history of Prussia consists of military annals; that the present generation of Prussians have three times threatened, and have four times engaged in, a foreign war; and that scarcely an acre of the broad fields of Germany but has been soaked in the blood of one or other variety of the "mild German." The *lanzknecht* is transformed; but he stalks still beneath the *pickelhaube*.

Prussia, and even Germany under the Prussian drill, is, in truth, a nation far more military than France. French opinion, had it had time to speak, would have held back Napoleon from his iniquitous career. But the Prussian rank and file (such a thing as public opinion does not exist) have neither the desire nor the power, as we saw in '66, to question the commands of their chiefs. And one of the most ludicrous examples of this slavish condition of things is seen in the way in which the entire German race re-echoes the language of its mere soldiers, and all the time that it wages a war of conquest, continues to repeat the formula, "we are the most peaceful of men," as if it were Von Moltke's own pass-word.

There is ground for thinking that many of them actually believe it. One of the most repulsive features of this war is the way in which a spirit of Pharisaism

has entered into the very soul of the German. Pharisaism—hypocrisy—cant was ever the Teutonic vice. But in the history of human folly, it never has been carried to such a point as in this late war. A nation crazed with revenge and ambition, keeps on thanking God for his mercy by platoons, the God which nine out of ten of their educated men openly or secretly ignore. A people who burn villages wholesale, and massacre peasants on system, swear that they are the most inoffensive of men. They heap on France every insult, and threaten every evil which hatred can invent, whilst whining through Europe that they are only seeking a safer line of frontier. They are never weary of calling Heaven to witness the immorality of France, whilst themselves waging the most savage of all modern wars, with inhuman cruelty and relentless hate. They for ever cry out over the falseness of France, whilst their own chosen mouthpiece, Bismarck, is perhaps the most accomplished master of fraud in modern times; whilst the official and literary utterances of the country form one system of organised falsehood; and the whole people gives itself up to mere stereotyped cant.[1]

This falsehood on one side or the other is no true test of right or wrong in this quarrel, but it is just as well to clear away misconceptions. No language can adequately stamp the untruth of French officialism and journalism through this war. It is simply repulsive. And few things in the frenzy of France have been more melancholy than the proneness to utter and to adopt fabrications. It is a sorry task to trace all the ravings of a distracted people in the hour of their death-struggle. But the falsehood of Germans throughout the war, if less wild, has been more systematic. German officials conceal the truth with at least as much skill as

[1] We now know the whole story from the cynical *Memoirs* of Prince Bismarck and the other official revelations (January 1908).

French distort it. In fraud, Bismarck has found no French match or even rival. One impudent cry succeeds another. Now it is to save their Holstein, now their Alsatian brothers; now it is the rescuing France from her corrupt rulers, purging Europe from French immorality, putting down military ambition, denouncing English partiality; now it is the guaranteeing their own frontier. One after another these shameless pretexts are taken up by word of command; and throughout Germany they are repeated by man, woman, and child with ridiculous monotony. French generals, and officials, and journals lie; but the French nation has not given itself up to organised cant at the bidding of its officers.

I have spoken plainly my opinion about German cruelty. I say it most deliberately that Germans are now carrying on war with inhuman cruelty. War so savage, torture so steadily inflicted on a civil community, has never been seen within two generations in Europe—save once. That once was the Russian war of extermination in Poland. It rests on the German race, with their pretended culture, to have carried into the heart of Western Europe the horrible traditions of Eastern barbarism. I do not intend to argue any isolated case. Bazeilles, Strasburg, Ablis, may perchance all have been burnt by the strictest of military codes. I do not charge the German leaders with having (exceptions excepted) exceeded in acts of blood what are called the laws of war. I do not deny that many of them may be proved to be what are called military necessities. Still less do I charge Germans individually with any love of cruelty as such. But, like all people of Teutonic race, the Germans, though they do not love cruelty, are perfectly capable of it to meet their ends; and indeed take to it with a calm inward satisfaction, and a

business-like completeness, which is more horrible even than the excesses of passion.

What has come over the English mind that it acquiesces so calmly in the sanguinary acts of this war? The Germans have not exactly pillaged. "The wise 'require' it call." But they have stripped one-third of France utterly to the bone. The ransacking the villager's home, seizing his cattle, and "requiring" his daily bread and the seed of his land, may be strictly according to the rules of war; but it is still inhuman cruelty. It deliberately reduces him to starvation. The bombarding the civil portion of cities may be a right of war, but it is still inhuman cruelty. The burning of towns and villages wholesale—twenty we were glibly told of in one telegram from Berlin—may be a military necessity, but it is inhuman cruelty. Plundering citizens by threat of instant death, the placing them on the engines, the massacre in cold blood of irregular troops, and still more of villagers suspected of aiding them, may be a mere measure of self-defence; but I call it inhuman cruelty. It is the murder of non-combatants or prisoners—and therefore terrorism.

Why tell us that Napoleon did it? Napoleon was a monster; and generations have passed since that day. To murder and burn alive civil populations—men, women, and children—to burn down whole districts, to massacre prisoners in cold blood, and to starve a civil population, may be war; but it is not the less inhuman. The fact remains—laws of war or not—that no nation has ventured on this bloody path in Europe for generations, except, as said before, the Russians in Poland. Military necessity forsooth! So said the Russians; so says every invader in a war of extermination. But what necessity compels the Germans still to carry on a war that must be so

carried on at all? What compels them, with France prostrate before them, still to continue this horrible course? Nothing but their own lust for conquest and glory. Not all the glozing of their truculent hypocrites — professors or journalists — who exhort them to these outrages as to acts of duty, can cloak this under the plea of self-protection. Deliberately, with a lie on their lips, they choose to continue a war of annihilation; a war in which every step is but a step into a deeper sea of blood and horror. Military necessity was ever the plea of pitiless ambition. If all this blood and horror, over and above all modern wars, is a military necessity of this war—then, in the name of civilisation, it is a social necessity to stop this war. The fact remains that, in mere pursuit now of military glory, the Germans are carrying on war as no foreign war in Europe has in this age been carried on, as it is an outrage to humanity to carry on war at all. On them, and on their children, will remain the curse of reviving in modern Europe the most bloody and barbarous traditions of the past—the wholesale wasting of an enemy's country, and the systematic massacre of civilians.[1]

Of all the horrible evils of this war, none perhaps is more sinister than this: the debauchery of public opinion by the taint of blood, the sinking back of European morality to the worst of the old level. Wars there have been in Europe, bloody and horrible enough, but for generations now they have been wars between regular armies. We had hoped and believed that what wars there were to be, were to be fought out as duels between set forces, and not waged like the wars of extermination of two Indian tribes. This

[1] Alas! in the last thirty-five years we have often seen this barbarous example followed—though not in Europe. The curse of Bismarckism is that it has torn up the old Law of Nations (1908).

hope has been crushed by Germany; and we have seen a war, not only the most gigantic in history, but one marked with almost every phase of antique barbarity—the wholesale massacre of non-combatants, the pillaging of civil property on system, the tyranny of a hateful conquest, the ferocity of martial law. And we listen to it all calmly; and feel reassured to know that it is all done strictly according to the books. Desolation and murder, sown broadcast, come upon us naturally enough, if nothing be done but what has the sanction of Tilly, or Marlborough, or Napoleon.

It is small plea to tell us that France would have done the same to Germany. If so, then on her would have lighted the curse. But as Germany *has* done it, on her it rests. When Russia in annihilating Poland told us that the fury of the Poles was such that it could not be broken down unless by these horrible extremities—what was the answer of Europe? Europe answered to her:—by what compulsion *must* you break down Poland? And so hereafter will rest on Germany the ban of civilised Europe.

The continuance of this horrible conflict is fast inuring us to the vile code of blood. For months the journals have filled our minds with the loathsome cant of the camp. Bloody battles are sketched off for us daily with a jaunty gusto which is sickening. Women and children are well tutored in all the hideous slang of the trooper; they read of "beautiful" charges, and "superb" shell-practice, and of "lively" fusillades. Not a brutality of the man-at-arms is spared us. The ghastly delights of the battlefield, the dreadful indifference to life, the foul professional jargon are served up to us with much patchwork word-painting, and much artificial joviality. This ape-like glee in mimicking the tone of war is degrading the moral sense. And the most horrible of human passions—the love

of destruction in its most settled and professional form —is nursed, and adorned, and stimulated, until it is growing to form a sort of standard of opinion.

It seems necessary now again to repeat old truisms —that the slaughter of mankind is horrible in itself, that the trade of slaughtering mankind is a horrible one, that the morality of the slaughterer of mankind is necessarily a low one. For two generations the military type of life had been sinking into just odium. But now, forsooth, war is to be rehabilitated. The military becomes the normal form of life. Our civil life is to be recast. Every citizen is to be a soldier. Every civilian talks of guns, and shells, and formations, and apes the jargon of the lowest form of fighting animal. Moltke and Bismarck are the great men of our age. Prussia is our model state of an armed and drilled nation. The one great public question is the recasting of our military system. Our amusement is to chatter over the incidents of these vast butcheries. Our literature is the picturesque recounting of the battle or the siege. And thus we are falling back in public morality a century. The military becomes the true type of human society; some pitiless strategist is a hero; some unscrupulous conspirator is a statesman; and the nation which is the best drilled and the best armed in Europe is to go to the van of modern civilisation. Brutalising and senseless creed! And this we owe to Prussia.[1]

It is this evil which is the most to be dreaded for the future—the destruction of international morality in Europe, and the restoration of the old military standard. To substitute Bismarckism for Napoleonism would be a very small gain to civilisation. And the Prussian army is vaster, more anti-popular, more

[1] And I have lived to see all this forecast too truly verified—and by our own countrymen in Asia and in Africa (1908).

thoroughly professional and retrograde in its tone even than the French. The French military *régime*—Napoleonism itself—always rested on a revolutionary basis, and existed in a revolutionary medium. It was always felt that an upheaving of the people could shake it to its foundations, and it was obliged to respect and sometimes to adopt popular principles. But the Prussian army rests on a feudal and monarchic basis exclusively. Patriotism in Prussia means obedience to the commander-in-chief. The ranks of society mean grades in the army. Thorough discipline reigns throughout it. And this, however valuable in a military point of view, in the political implies the stagnation of all civil life. Thus the Prussian army (and for all international purposes the Prussian army is the Prussian government) represents the most retrograde spirit in modern society, and is the natural foe of every element of progress. What are we to gain, therefore, by substituting the Prussian for the Napoleonic *régime* in Europe?

We are told to trust to Germany at the close of her victory assuming a liberal form. What are the grounds for any such hope? Bismarck may promise to "crown the edifice," as Napoleon did every Spring, and with as great result. We have seen the Prussian government engaging in one war of conquest after another; but we never heard that the people could exert the smallest influence on its government. Why will they do so when Bismarck and Moltke have riveted the chains of Germany — for it is for Germany, not France, that they are forging chains? What single political principle in Europe is due to Prussia? Politically, Prussia is a camp, and the Prussian is a conscript. With all the wonderful intelligence, industry, culture, and energy, for which individual Prussians cannot be too highly rated, the

nation, as a political whole, has been ground down by drill and bureaucracy, of which their very state education is a part, to political nonentity. There is more true public life in Russia itself. I do not forget the strong language used by deputies and journalists. But neither exert the smallest influence over the action of the Monarchy and its Bureaucracy.

Now the elevation of a spirit like this (a spirit the better side of which is seen in the antiquated pride of the old martinet-king, and its worst in the "blood and iron" of his crafty minister) must tell on the public opinion of Europe. Let us suppose that Germany returns, having added to her frontiers Lorraine and Alsace, in the whole of her vast strength, and with the immense prestige of her unparalleled successes. The position of France, Germany holding Metz and Strasburg, is simply that of Piedmont whilst Austria held the Quadrilateral. Germany would hold an armed hand pointed at the heart of France. With her capital and her richest provinces almost under the guns of these great fortresses, France would be in every question at the mercy of her great neighbour. She must be the centre of a restless agitation, looking for allies everywhere, and seeking her opportunity anywhere. We well remember what it was for European peace to have had an Italian and a Polish question—what would it be to have a French question, France suffering a standing humiliation and danger? Europe would not enjoy a day of repose or peace.

There are those who look to see Prussia actually dominating Europe in arms. We need look for no such danger. Undoubtedly there are the germs of many a sinister combination. Denmark, no doubt, will fall one day a prey to her old despoiler. A struggle for the German subjects of Austria is inevit-

able. Holland and Belgium both have reason to fear. Russia, in spite of dynastic sympathies, must be the enemy of aggrandised Prussia. Prussia already coquets with the Pope and threatens Italy, no doubt as succeeding to the Holy Roman Empire. Patriotic murmurs will soon be raised to recall their erring German brothers in Switzerland. The theory of a German Rhine (some filibustering professor will explain to us) requires that it flows through dominions of the Emperor of Germany from the glaciers to the sea. They even now are calling out for the rescue of their lost brothers in Heligoland.[1] There are quarrels enough and to spare; causes and "races" enough to embroil Europe for a century. There is the unburied Holstein question, the Polish question, Panslavism, Czeckism, Pan-Germanism, the Rhine question, the Belgian question, the Heligoland question, the Papal question; why not the Burgundian question, and the restoration of the empire of Charlemagne? If Europe is to be recast to fit the crazy pedantry of German professors, the Prussian spread-eagle will give us all a pleasant time of it.

Now it is not necessary to suppose that Prussia is about to overrun Europe with her troops as she is overrunning France. That is not the danger. We have not come to that point of weakness—we non-German people of Europe, and perhaps even German docility would have a limit somewhere. But what is to be feared is the passing of the undisputed supremacy of force to such a power as Prussia—organised exclusively for war, retrograde, feudal, despotic,—more unscrupulous and ambitious than Napoleonism itself. If Prussia returns home triumphant, and mistress of the greatest fortresses of France, Europe is handed

[1] Brothers so judiciously rescued in 1890, and so happily restored by our Imperialists (1908).

over to a generation of arming for war; and civilisation is thrown back incalculably. The military and reactionary powers will have their own black reign again as they did from the treaty of Vienna. All the life of Southern Germany will be crushed out of her. In Northern Germany there is not, and never was, any political life. Germany at this moment is under the rule of the sword as completely as the conquered provinces of France. The mild German may hope and protest, but he is mild enough in his own country. He has waited, with the patience of a sentinel, for some civic life to be given him by his "good and pious" king and his clever, wise Bismarck—but he may wait for a century. Germany is really under martial law at this moment, and likely so to remain. The democratic leaders are in prison for protesting against a policy of annexation. Public opinion is stifled by police and soldiery. And the leaders of the people who raise a voice against militarism have something to put up with far more serious than the amenities of a journal.

Do the English people seriously consider what even from their insular point of view this portends to them? The capitulation of Sedan tore up the treaties of 1856. The blood and sacrifices of the Crimean war are thrown away, or must be repeated. Which alternative will England choose? Russia is free, she is actually preparing to carry out her schemes of conquest in the East. Prussia is openly threatening this country. She repeats, and her drilled press and literature reiterate impudent charges against our neutrality. There is an ominous courting of the friendship of America, with what end every one can see. Prussia openly aims at maritime power, the command of the Baltic, and the recovery of Heligoland. Denmark may be swallowed up, as the first step in this career.

Holland may be the next leaf in the northern artichoke. Belgium, by the force of events, may be compelled to throw herself into the arms of France. In a word, there is hardly a country left without embroilment and danger. Europe is thrown into the cauldron to be re-cast, and a new Holy Alliance is forming on the principle of "Blood and Iron" which England must meet *absolutely alone.*

What should be our policy? I do not hesitate to say—to check the progress of Prussian ambition. To check it by diplomacy if possible; but by arms if necessary. It is not in the name of France, nor of the French Republic; but in the highest interests of European peace and progress that it is the duty of England to withstand the domination of a new empire of the sword. It is time to raise the retrograde and military weight of Prussia off Europe, and to force her back to her true place. How is this to be done, even if we wished it, men ask aghast, and what can resist Prussia? As if statesmanship, energy, and power had left this country for ever. Is this nation Holland, Belgium, Denmark, that it is to count for nothing in European politics?

In the first place it is to be done by statesmanship. If England threw her whole heart into it, and it was known that she had pledged herself to it, she could form a great coalition of neutral states. She should put herself at the head of a federation of the weak, which in itself would be a strong federation. She should bind Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland first in offensive and defensive alliances, in which each member of the union guaranteed the inviolability of each of the others with their whole force. She should put herself right by restoring all her foreign possessions in Europe. She might hold Heligoland for the new Federation or for Denmark,

to whom it seems to belong. She might restore Gibraltar to Spain, and Malta, if required, to Italy. Then if statesmanship be a real thing at all, Spain, Italy, Austria, all already sympathising with France, could be brought into the alliance.[1] They would be feeble hands who, using such a force, and with the weight of all Western Europe in one, could not by a moral demonstration alone cause the German to pause, and to conclude a reasonable peace.

And failing this, for one, I would shrink from no consequences. If Germany, in her headstrong ambition, insisted on the destruction of France, and no joint effort of neutrals were possible, let England throw herself into the rescue of France with her whole forces, moral and material, naval and military. If the task be hopelessly beyond her strength, then England has ceased to be a great power, and must have sunk back indeed since the days of Pitt or Chatham or Marlborough. It is a heavy task, doubtless, and one not to be done in a day. But it is not hopeless. Let money, guns, and supplies be poured into France, with the aid of the English fleet, and it may be well believed that France could turn the tide. She has a million of men in arms. What she needs is time and every material of war. And if that did not suffice—let 100,000 men in red, equipped with every munition of war, be planted in some spot in Brittany or Normandy where, supplied and covered by the fleet, they might take up a new Torres Vedras.

Then, let Paris fall or not, with the incalculable moral support and inexhaustible material supplies of England, France would not fall. She would rise more desperate after every defeat, and more resolved after every calamity. She might be driven back to Brittany

[1] Something like such a pacific alliance or *entente* has been at last secured, mainly by the King (1908).

or the Pyrenees. She might endure every agony that a nation could suffer. It might be years before the struggle ended. But once let it be known that the whole heart and power of England was on her side, English gold, stores, and arms pouring in at every port, and an English entrenched camp as a reserve, and the tenacity of France would do the rest; slowly the grip of the eagle would grow feebler, slowly the exhausted conquerors would withdraw, and at length the armies of the two western nations, brother leaders of the van of civilisation, would force back the German invader to his own border. Such would be the policy of Chatham, of William, or of Cromwell.

It is a great task. But great nations have great tasks to do, and statesmanship is the doing great tasks; but it is a task worth every sacrifice. With France prostrate under the armed heel of Germany, with Germany in possession of Alsace and Lorraine, with that retrograde military power the acknowledged arbiter of Europe, Europe can know no disarming, no progress for a generation. I disdain to answer the canting plea that these provinces can add to the safety of Germany or the peace of Europe. It is obviously the real object of this annexation, to enable Prussia to maintain a vast military establishment and vantage-ground, from which to take Southern Germany in flank, and coerce her in the great struggle which is about to commence there. The *régime* of war, of conquest, of subjugation begins again; and civilisation is arrested for generations.

What still remains for France? Simply to fight on. France cannot be conquered. No great nation can. The cession of Alsace and Lorraine is not merely the surrender of two provinces. It is the delivering up the country, its capital, and its independ-

ence, bound hand and foot, to a ruthless neighbour. It is what no Frenchman worthy of the name, could assent to. "Better burn France to ashes rather," as Danton said. Let us take a parallel case. France (we will suppose), in a sudden and unprovoked war, has seized Belgium, Holland, and Denmark, and formed along the whole northern coast of Europe a network of arsenals, which sheltered a combined fleet far larger and stronger than any possible British fleet. For years she equips this fleet with the avowed purpose of wresting from England the supremacy of the sea. England rings with indignation, jealousy, and fear. In an evil hour an English ministry, without consulting the nation, hurls the country into war, and attacks the French fleet in its moorings. Through flagrant incapacity of the English Admiralty (a not incredible assumption) the entire navy of England is annihilated. The French forces invade this country. Everything goes down before them. They take the arsenals, and hold one-third of England, wasting it with fire and sword. The dynasty (perhaps an impossible supposition) is swept away for ever. London still holds out, and throughout England vast forces are being organised for defence. The only terms that the conqueror will accept are the permanent possession of Portsmouth and Plymouth, their harbours, docks, and forts, with Dorsetshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall, to be incorporated with France, on the plea that they were once possessions of the Dukes of Normandy, or were once inhabited by Bretons. These are the conquerors' terms. England is still not exhausted in men, money, arms, or material. London contains an army twice as numerous as its besiegers. The north of England swarms with armies. What Englishman will say (with his name, not with his initials) that he would call on his countrymen to sign such a peace?

The man who could do it, or talk of it, must have the heart of a slave.

And yet there are men quite filled with moral indignation that Frenchmen can refuse such a peace. They talk quite grandly of the guilt of refusing such terms. How many a lost cause have Englishmen applauded — the Polish, the Circassian, the Arab defences, the defence of Hungary and Rome in 1849, of the Danes in 1864, of the Confederates in 1866, were heroic in the eyes of most of those who are insulting the defiance of France. And now these hypocrites —who hate France—call on her to yield in the name of peace and good sense. In the meantime the case of France is not hopeless. Every day her spirit seems to grow more resolute. Paris may fall—may have fallen before these pages are published—but that is not the end. It may be that this is but the beginning of the war, and not its end. The wealth of France is boundless, her population is unexhausted, her natural resources infinite. She has nearly a million of men under arms ; she has six or seven armies in the field, and all her seaboard and ports untouched. It is the fashion to sneer at her efforts, to deny her courage, and to undervalue her resources. For my part, in spite of wild speeches and divided counsels, I call the resolute front of her actual rulers heroic. I will not be curious to note their faults or their follies. I will forgive them and honour them for carrying on the traditions of the great Danton, and for uttering defiance in the midst of unparalleled disasters. I call the rush to arms of all able-bodied Frenchmen heroic, and in the main I accept that as a fact. I call the willingness of Frenchmen to bear every extremity rather than a dishonourable peace heroic. And above all, I call the defence of Paris, the unity of its multiform population, and the resolve of its attitude heroic.

All this is much out of fashion now. It is easy to make sport of the ravings of a distracted people in such a crisis, to repeat the murmurs of the cravens, and to paint pictures of panic here, bombast there; of suspicion in one place, delusion in other, and dissensions everywhere. We all forget how France now lives as under a microscope, and thousands of unfriendly eyes are watching every spasm. We all forget too how stupidly a Teutonic people mistakes the excitement of a Keltic people for weakness. Their ways are not our ways; but it does not follow that big words go always with little deeds. It is easy for the victors to be dignified and calm; easier especially for a people of such admirable self-possession and so perfectly drilled as the Germans. But where is the nation in the agony of such mortal strife that would escape confusion, divided counsels, and wild talk? The energy, unity, and patriotism of France in the first shock are far greater than was shown either by Prussian, German, or Austrian after Austerlitz, Jena, and Wagram, greater than was shown by the great American people in the first months after Bull's Run. Let us only trust that if so horrible a catastrophe ever should befall this nation, all civil strife and parties may be unknown, that all administrators may act with dignity and judgment, that false hopes and wild speech may be as little heard as ungenerous suspicions; that upon the annihilation of the whole regular force and the loss of the whole material of war in the country, a million of citizens may be gathered in arms in two months; that seven armies may be organised, equipped, and armed; that bloodshed, fire, famine, and pillage may not break the spirit of our people; that our citizens may calmly submit to starvation and bombardment, and that throughout the length and breadth of the

island there may rise up only one cry—War to the knife, rather than dishonourable peace.[1]

But come what may — if France drive out the invader, or sink under his weight—certain considerations remain for the statesman's attention. This war involves social changes greater than any since 1789. The war has been caused by social movements, and it must issue in still greater. Bismarck and Napoleon were each driven to divert the energy of their respective nations to foreign war by the upheaving of the popular spirit at home. The imminent danger to his own throne at last drove Napoleon into war. The very disasters of France are due to the same cause. France (we must never forget) is still heaving with internal revolution. There the great social struggle between capital and labour, that prolonged struggle on which England is entering, and to which Germany is approaching, is already far advanced. The real cause of the war, of the disasters, of the powerlessness of France, is one and the same :—that France is in the convulsion of a social revolution. She is divided against herself. Workman and employer, rich and poor, stand apart in two camps, distrusting each other, counter-working each other ; and thus a prey to political adventurers. France is thus for a time weak ; and falls in war an easy victim to the unity of Germany, in which, from its more backward social condition, all this crisis is yet to come. It is very probable also that the gradual disintegration of France into smaller political aggregates, a process which awaits the larger states of Europe, has already begun. There are now three or four French political units.[2]

[1] As we know, within two months after this was written, Paris was starved into surrender; the treachery of Bazaine sacrificed the last regular army of France; social enmity and the selfish apathy of the South ruined the defence ; and Peace was made. (1908).

[2] The disintegrating process and the cause of Anti-militarism have now reached an ominous degree (1908).

But the moment France has weathered the storm, the impulse given to her social movement will be enormous. The Republic has been established; and the Republic itself is the only institution in France which has not been discredited. France, too, has been happily relieved of that incubus which has hitherto rested on progress — her army. Those 350,000 prætorians — those marshals, generals, and staff; guns, standards, material, and eagles — the whole Chauvinist camp, from Emperor to drummer-boy, have been swept into space and into ignominy. The professional soldier in France is morally dead. Her army, the curse of Europe and of civilisation, has gone out with an ill savour. It was not the *déchéance* of Napoleon that was proclaimed in Paris on the 4th of September, but the *déchéance* of militarism. The soldier is become an anachronism; the symbol of national degradation. The only sort of honour has been won by workmen and peasant volunteers—a true citizen-army of national guard. For the first time in French history, the workmen of the great towns are armed and organised, and the whole of the new army from top to bottom is essentially democratic. In a military sense, this may as yet be a weakness; but, in a political sense, it means the emancipation of the people.

Even after the fall of Paris, the war may be indefinitely prolonged. But it must end some day. And then, with France exhausted, stripped of everything, wealth and the means of wealth annihilated, she will be in the position of a new country; capital will be in search of labour, and labour will be master of the situation. However long the war continue, and however great the sufferings of France, it is the rich who really suffer. The poor, so long as they keep their own skins whole and are not actually starving,

do not lose much, for the simple reason that they have nothing to lose. A Prussian invasion to them involves no greater personal loss than individual distress, hard times, or a lock-out—indeed, far less, for they are the most indispensable part of the public, and must be fed.

On the conclusion of peace, therefore, the people, socially and politically, will be masters of the destinies of France, and ultimately of Europe. All that France loses in material ascendancy in Europe, she will gain in moral ascendancy. Peace cannot be made in such a way but that relatively labour shall be left in the ascendant. It was so after the hurly-burly of 1793, and it will be so again after 1870. And the workmen are the only people who have upheld the honour of France. Thus, however France may be materially crippled, the cause of the Republic and of labour will come to the front. Even if the Republic itself collapse in the strife, for France is still divided into two camps—the rich and the poor—the republican element will be strong. And France will retain and increase her moral influence. Not only Napoleonism and militarism are *déchus* henceforth in France, but something else; and that is, the indolent extravagance of the rich. The degraded and selfish pomp of the second Empire is a thing of the past. For once since 1793 liberty *and equality* have begun to be realities.

But the people in France will not stand alone. Round them will gather the people and the republicanism of Europe. In all the sufferings and humiliations of France, this cause will gain a new impulse. From henceforward the French people alone, even in the eyes of German democrats, will be felt to bear the standard of progress. The dangerous designs of Prussia, her retrograde ambition, will be the great enemies of the people all over the world. Round

the workmen of France those of England have long gathered; those of Switzerland, Spain, Italy, and Germany herself are gathering. The issue is so critical for the future, and the dangers from the reactionary power are so serious, that they override all national and local questions. Now it will neither be England, France, nor Germany; but Republic against Monarchy. Round the Prussian throne gather all the retrograde principles; round the French people all the progressive. In this great issue, national and party questions dwindle. All governments will henceforward be alike to us. Whig or Tory, and the rest are but vestry-room cries. The one cause in which every other is merged, is the cause of the People.

Not that this great struggle need be one of arms and of bloodshed. It is essentially a moral struggle; one of principles. The needle-gun has beaten down the army of Napoleon, but it cannot beat back French ideas; of all others, not the social ideas of the French people. Purged in the fire of this crisis, these ideas will regain new purity and life. They are swaying and heaving English society. Germany itself is honeycombed with them. And long and fierce ere long will be the struggle in Germany itself between Bismarckism and Industrialism — between blood and iron and the German people. But whatever else may be the issue, we may be sure that the real spirit that is ultimately to triumph after this frightful catastrophe will not be a military one. In spite of all the fighting, in spite of the deadly hatred of race begotten by this contest, and the undying spirit of revenge and pride it will leave behind, the industrial *régime* is antagonistic to the military; and the increased ascendency of the people must be fatal in the long run to militarism.

There is much in this, too, very worthy of thought by our own governing classes. The attitude of the

French Republic and people under the German yoke has sent a thrill through the English workmen greater than anything which has happened since 1848. They are watching their own rulers with ill-restrained impatience and indignation. To them the cause of labour and the Republic is one and the same all over the world. The interests of English landlords, of British merchants and shopkeepers, of Whig and Tory governments, of Liberal or Conservative cabals, to them are dust in the balance. They are loudly and distinctly calling on their rulers to save the French Republic from extinction by German invaders. For that they are ready for sacrifices in blood and money.

One thing they will not suffer. They will not see their governing classes shrinking from any real action in Europe, and timidly reducing this country to a nullity, whilst feebly patching up our own rotten military system at home by resorting to the device of tyranny abroad. A real reorganisation of the army in a national sense is yet far off. Really to make it such an army as the Prussian is simply impossible. This English nation, at any rate, will never be drilled into Bismarckism. And any feeble attempts to Prussianise this country, to raise a conscription, in fact—to force the working people into the ranks, will be met and resisted by all and every means. The attempt forcibly to enrol English citizens will be stopped by every resource known to a people defending their personal liberty — the *ultima ratio populi* not even excepted. There are men enough in this country quite capable of seeing what is meant, and of organising the national resistance. To attempt such a plot against all the traditions of English liberty would be the end of governing class, monarchy, and constitution. No blood-tax will ever be levied in English homes.

November 15, 1870.

II

THE DUTY OF ENGLAND

(*January* 17, 1871)

The following Essay was written during the Franco-German War in the middle of January, and was the first article in the Fortnightly Review *of February 1871 (vol. ix.). At the time of writing Paris was on the eve of capitulating through famine, and Gambetta was calling on the country to continue the struggle. The writer was still sanguine that England would be roused to take a part. He and his friends had organised a great meeting of Trades Unionists in St. James's Hall in support of the French Republic (January 10); and many influential sections of English society joined that cause. The government of Mr. Gladstone declined to interfere in any way, as may be read in vol. ii. of the* Life. *Now that we have the* Memoirs *of all the chief politicians concerned, English, German, and French, the writer sees no reason to modify the language he used in 1871, nor can he admit that the policy he advocated was either impracticable or unwise (1908).*

The true question which this war presents for Englishmen to answer, is not whether France or Germany have done most to provoke each other, nor whether France or Germany have the larger sum of wrongs to avenge, nor whether it is desirable for Germany to be one and to be powerful, nor yet

whether much that is vicious be not mingled in French policy and the French character. The real question is none of these; and it is sophistry only which can lead us off upon these issues. The true question is a very plain one. It is this. *Is it for the interest of civilisation, or of England, that France should be trampled on and dismembered by Germany?*

I say the former are all false issues, and have little to do with the matter before us. Let us grant that the larger share in provoking this long-preparing struggle must be laid at the door of France; as I certainly shall grant she wantonly commenced it. Is it enough for a nation to have wrongfully entered upon war, to make us rejoice at seeing it torn in pieces; rejoice over a policy which must hand over Europe to discord and hate? To sum up the historical wrongs of Germany may exercise the ingenuity of biographers; but are politicians ready to make retaliation the new key of international relations? A man may devoutly desire the unity of Germany, without finding it precisely in the smoking ruins of Paris. It may be the best guarantee of peace that Germany should be powerful. It is a bold leap from that to welcoming six months of pillage, fire, and slaughter. We may wish to see Germany both safe and strong, without caring to see France mangled and frantic with despair. We never deny that the French temper has many a blot, and French history many a foul page. We may even hate French folly and vice. What nation has not its own follies and its own vices? What puling Judas is he who would sneer away the life of a nation by these hypocrite's laments? We have never yet admitted that the vices of national character entitled one race to come forward as the executioner of another, to wreak its hate and fill its greed in the name of national morality. We have

ceased to regard a conquering horde as the chosen avenger of God, or national disaster as the same with national guilt.

We may admit all these propositions of the apologists of Prussian invasion, and yet the case is not answered, nor even touched. Suppose France wrong at first, to have been wrong in the past, to have been and to be, as a nation, foolish and guilty. Suppose that the unity of Germany is the greatest of human goods, and its supremacy the best hope of mankind; what has all this to do with the long-drawn torture of France, with the firing of her citizens, and the trampling on her provinces and her children? The greatness of Germany is not secured, the guilt of France is not cured, by dragging out a brutalising and fiendish war, until agony itself seems to sustain life and to inspire defiance. All the specious grounds on which some still try to justify all this, no more justify this war than they justify Pandemonium. There is but one true question. What good end requires all this fire and this blood? *Is it for the interest of civilisation that France should be trodden down and dismembered by Germany?*

To say that France is being trampled on and dismembered, is to use words far short of the truth. For six months one-third of France has been given up to fire and sword. For 300 or 400 miles vast armies have poured on. Every village they have passed through has been the victim of what is only organised pillage. Every city has been practically sacked, ransacked on system; its citizens plundered, its civil officials terrorised, imprisoned, outraged, or killed. The civil population has been, contrary to the usage of modern warfare, forced to serve the invading armies, brutally put to death, reduced to wholesale starvation and desolation. Vast tracts of the richest

and most industrious districts of Europe have been deliberately stripped and plunged into famine, solely in order that the invaders might make war cheaply. Irregular troops, contrary to all the practices of war, have been systematically murdered, and civil populations indiscriminately massacred, solely to spread terror. A regular system of ingenious terrorism has been directed against civilians, as horrible as anything in the history of civil or religious wars. Large and populous cities have been, not once, but twenty, thirty, forty times bombarded and burnt, and the women and children in them wantonly slaughtered, with the sole object of inflicting suffering. All this has been done, not in licence or passion, but by the calculating ferocity of scientific soldiers. And, lastly, when the last chance of saving Paris was gone, and it became a matter of a few weeks of famine, they must needs fire and shatter a city of 2,000,000 of souls.

Let us remember that all this was done and carried on for five months after France had sued for peace in the dust; and had offered what was practically everything except her national independence, and the honour and self-respect of every Frenchman. It is well known that there were no serious terms which France would have rejected short of dismemberment. To give up 2,000,000 of the best citizens of France, and make them permanent prisoners to Germany, is what no nation in Europe would do whilst its powers remained. Let Englishmen quietly contemplate surrendering Sussex and Hampshire to an invader, to be permanently annexed to France. This is what Frenchmen are coolly exhorted to do. But it was much more than this. To give the possession of Metz and Strasburg, the Moselle and the Vosges, to united Germany, is simply to make France her prisoner, to make France what Piedmont was with Austria in the

Quadrilateral, what England would be if the whole coast from Dover to the Isle of Wight were made permanently French soil.

And because Frenchmen rejected these terms, terms which the vilest of Englishmen would, in their own case, turn from with scorn, Prussia has poured on, revelling in this orgy of blood. In politics there are no abstract rights. All matters between nations are a balance of advantages. And even if there were, on the side of Germany, some decent claim for what they sought, humanity will brand the people that insisted on that claim through all the hideous cost which it involved. A gambler (to pursue their favourite metaphor) may have a fair claim to the stakes he has won ; but we still call him a murderer who deliberately kills the loser that he may seize them. The language-boundary may seem such an obvious arrangement to a pedant at his desk ; and the strategic frontier may run glibly off the journalist's pen. One nation may be most moderate in its demand ; and the other may be most blind in its resistance. But if, in the hard proof of facts, this natural boundary or this moderate claim can be won solely by desolating a million homes, and by turning provinces into one vast charnel-house, it is only the tyrant with the heart of steel who seeks that end at such a cost.

But I had forgotten "the security" and "the permanent peace" of Germany! The security of Germany which, unapt for war, with only a few poor fortresses on the Rhine, and but a million of mere armed citizens, will never be able to rest for fear of France, without a new line of French fortresses, strongholds, and mountain passes. She will never be really safe till she has 2,000,000 of Frenchmen writhing under her grasp on her French border. The poor wolves must have a fold to protect them from the

greedy sheep. And how can the great German and the great French nations ever dwell, side by side, in unity and peace hereafter, until every French field has been trampled by the Uhlan, till every French home has given up its one or two dead, or at least smelt the petroleum of our highly cultivated troopers? Once plant in every French heart a feeling that a German is a Red Indian savage on a scalping-party; sow a blood feud which the very infants may suck in with their mothers' milk, and we shall have ample security and a permanent peace evermore!

Can we doubt that the real object of Germany is the dismemberment of France? I know that the apologists of Prussia here, straining out the last dregs of captious objection, ask us sometimes, with an air of honest doubt, how we know that Bismarck insists on the dismemberment of France; and one of these advocates has told us, almost indignantly, that if he thought the Prussian had taken Metz (for instance) with any intention of appropriating it for himself, he for one would be the last, etc., etc. To this point is the case of Prussia reduced! How do we know, forsooth, that Germany insists on incorporating all Alsace and at least half Lorraine, the Vosges, the Moselle, Strasburg, Metz, and a string of French fortresses, the whole "language-boundary," as the cant runs, and *something more*, to be settled by Count Moltke? We know it because, whatever journalists here may find it convenient to say, every utterance in Germany, official and semi-official, combines to tell us so. We all know now how completely Count Bismarck controls and inspires the whole well-affected press of Germany, and muzzles the ill-affected; how officials and aspirants to office watch his every look; how journalists and professors truckle to his nod. With one consent they all tell us that Germany must have at least all this, and

an indefinite something more. If the words of official journals and publicists in high favour are worth anything when they assure us that Count Bismarck wants nothing but a united and peaceful Germany, we may trust them not to misrepresent him when they tell us he wants Alsace and Lorraine. To such a length has the belief of this run, that Count Bismarck cannot afford to disappoint it. And yet, seeing the set of this current, and the concurrence of all who were supposed to represent him, he has never directly or indirectly attempted to check it. Whether Count Bismarck demands Alsace and Lorraine or not, it is plain that Germany does, and believes them to be hers as completely as if peace were signed. Men of sense judge matters of politics by what seems reasonable on a balance of probabilities, and cannot be stopped to answer every wild suggestion of an advocate whose case is desperate.

Whatever Count Bismarck may find it at present convenient to say, or not to say, it is plain to any one of common sense that Germany most undoubtedly does demand large provinces of France, several of her chief fortresses, and a long line of strongholds. If not, if Germany is continuing the war for only some small object, even let us say for Strasburg, the invasion assumes a still more wanton character. Practical politicians will not strain the excited words of M. Jules Favre quite literally, pronounced as they were in September ; nor can they doubt that after an unbroken succession of fresh calamities, Frenchmen would have been inclined to terms had the Germans really been content with anything short of the dismemberment of their country. Had Germany no such end, then the last four months of horror have had no purpose but to satisfy the lust of military glory. But as every utterance of those Germans who had the best right to know

has declared, so every act in the dealing with the conquered provinces has proved, that the wrenching off most vital members of the French nation is the very least of the demands of Germany.

It may well be that Count Bismarck's ultimate intentions are not yet fully known. But it is not that he will ask less, but a great deal *more*, than has yet been claimed for him. When did he ever yet stay his hand in open violence, except that he saw his way to his end by artifice? If he gave up forcing on the Prussian people his system of army extension, it was only to rouse their military passions more fiercely by corrupting them with baits to their vanity. When he closed the war against Denmark, it was only that he saw his way to seizing her territory by treachery and fraud. When he made peace after Sadowa, it was because he saw that secret diplomacy could thenceforth effect the rest of his programme. Peace or war, fraud or force, are with him only different means to the same end—the military aggrandisement of Prussia. He uses both alternately, always in the same onward path. Like the lion in the fable, if he is great in bringing down the prey, he is yet greater in securing the whole of it to himself by chicanery or threats. And it is to this man, as false and as insatiate as the ideal of Macchiavelli, that Europe is to confide for wisdom and moderation.

It is but too true that we have not Count Bismarck's real demands. For my part, I should wonder if the world has yet heard the half of them. His enemies as yet have found that to make peace with Count Bismarck is as hard a bargain as to continue war with him; perhaps even a harder. The greatest of the German chiefs loudly declare that they will be satisfied with nothing short of reducing France to a second or a third-rate Power. One of the foremost long since

explained this to mean that she was to be placed in the position of Spain. Others use the phrase "of annihilating the power" of France. The "Red Prince," as they delight to call him in the Mohican dialect of the camp, announced his intention of "destroying the power" of France. Now, when have these military chiefs not kept their threats? Morally speaking, they are men on the level of the Black Prince, Wallenstein, or Charles the Twelfth—relics of a past age; strong, able, born soldiers; of an insatiable ambition, and scorning everything but military honour. To them the annihilation of France is just as worthy an object as it was to Catherine of Russia to destroy Poland or to crush Turkey. They honestly believe themselves capable of it. What is to prevent their attempting it? The Prussian soldier-caste conceives the destruction of France to be the most glorious of all achievements; and the Prussian soldier-caste is absolute master for the present of the German people. Count Bismarck is but the organ of that caste, its one man of genius who has seen how to dress up that singular mediæval figure as the champion of modern ideas, and the leader of the people. But Count Bismarck has not changed the lanz-knecht heart within that caste; it beats fiercely within him, too. And though he can force its tongue to talk in the language of modern statesmen, its true nature is to be found in men to whom pity is unknown, and progress a by-word, men between whom and modern civilisation there is a feud as deep as between backwoodsmen and Sioux. These are the men—no boasters, and no madmen—who have declared in tones not loud but deep, for the annihilation of France as a great Power.

What is to stand between these men and their end? The intelligence of Germany? But every one who knows Germany has seen—for my part I have seen for

twenty years — gathering up in the minds of the literary and military classes of Prussia a hatred of France, Frenchmen, and French ideas more deadly than anything we know of in race-feuds. And with this hatred there went a deep, fierce thirst to humble France one day in the dust. I do not pretend that this feeling existed outside the soldier and the academic class. In both, I believe, it was based on mortified pride. Prussians, conscious of their wonderful power both for war and in thought, were stung with rage when they saw how little their unapproachable pre-eminence was recognised in Europe, and how much French egotism and versatility had carried off from them their legitimate honours. Be the cause what it may, men who have long watched this intense hatred, existing, I admit, in only two classes, and of course not in all members of them, such men have felt and insisted for years that the most gigantic war in history must be the issue of it.

It has come ; and this hatred has filled its maw, and has swollen to incredible proportions. What, then, is to stop it from working out its avowed end—the annihilation of France as a great Power ? The Crown Prince ? And men can build all their hopes on a life, which a stray Chassepot bullet may end, to give us for twenty years the regency of the Red Prince. Who is to stop it ? The intelligence of Germany, now employed in inventing apologies for every act of aggression ? The good sense of the German people ?—But the German people are now only the German rank and file, and public opinion is insubordination. The Great Powers of Europe ?—But they are employed in doing reverence to the new Emperor, with the ministers of "Happy England" at their head. Let us rest assured that the Prussian chiefs will give up their project of annihilating the

power of France for one cause only—that they find it impossible. Till they find it impossible they will try, in spite of the conviction of honest burghers in Fatherland that they are a quiet home-loving race, and in spite of goody-goody platitudes from courtly professors.

Count Bismarck has certainly not told us his ultimate demands. They will include all that has yet been asked for in territory with a large addition (perhaps that of Nancy and the whole of Lorraine). But there will be other demands not necessarily of territory and perhaps not immediately disclosed, the effect of which will be to leave France absolutely at the mercy of Germany. Austria is now of less account in Germany than she was at the moment of peace, and Denmark is also of less account in the Baltic than when she gave up the struggle. Count Bismarck is a swordsman who gives wounds from which his adversaries do not recover; but from which they grow weaker and weaker. And when he wipes from his sword the blood shed in this great war, it will be to leave France permanently crippled. Who or what is to stay him?

Let us take merely the already announced demands of Prussia, and see how France will stand at the end of the war. There will first be an enormous war indemnity. Its sum-total will, in truth, be something as yet unconceived. It will be measured, however, not by the demands of Germany, but by the limit of what it is possible by direct or indirect means to squeeze out of France. There will then be the prostration of France by the exhaustion of the war, and the desolation and famine of about one-third of her area. She will probably be compelled to cede some of her colonies, and may possibly be restricted in her standing army. Metz, Strasburg, with the whole

chain of fortresses on the Moselle and Vosges line from Longwy to Belfort will form the rampart, the guns of which are directed upon her heart. The whole of the French will thus be added to the whole of the German strongholds along the left district of the Rhine, and consolidated into a complex chain more tremendous than anything in Europe. It will be the Austrian Quadrilateral multiplied tenfold; a line for defence preposterously overdone; for offence almost irresistible. This vast line of forts will hold the east of France in a vice. Within their walls 100,000 men may easily in peace be housed, and around them 500,000 may easily in war be sheltered. They are ten days' march from Paris. And between them and Paris not a single fortress, not a single military depot, and scarcely a single defensible line of country exists.

Now, without giving too much importance to strategic frontiers, it is impossible to be blind to what follows when a strong power posts itself in a menacing position. If Antwerp in French hands would be a pistol pointed at the heart of England, if Sebastopol was a standing menace to Constantinople, if the Quadrilateral gave Austria the command of North Italy, then France, with nothing between her capital and this vast strategic line, would be prostrate at the feet of Germany. A Power which commands a million of men, with the overwhelming superiority now proved in a hundred victories, possessing along the left side of the Rhine the chief of all the great fortresses of Europe, and a quadruple quintuple network of strongholds in which the resources of nature have been used by the skill of two nations, would hold France in the hollow of her hand. A fortress is as useful for the most part for offence as for defence, and with the whole of the eastern fortresses of France turned over to Germany,

and the heart and capital of France turned naked to their guns, Germany would be as absolutely mistress of France as Austria in Mantua and Verona was mistress of Lombardy and Venetia. Hand over Alsace and Lorraine, and France stands disarmed—the prisoner of armed Germany. It is easy for those who turn the selfish growl of the tradesmen into a sneer, to cry out with a gibe—"What are two or three departments out of seventy? what are two millions out of forty? now you are beaten, pay up the stakes, and for God's sake let us get to business!" So he with the money-bag: but politicians of common sense know that this is no mere question of surrendering broad provinces or even of giving up good citizens. It is not a prince losing an appanage, or a nation losing a subject province. It is the life or death of France as a great Power. It is her independence as a nation. It is whether she shall be one of the Powers of Europe, or the State prisoner of Imperial Germany.

"France," say the optimists, "will be always a great Power, come what may." Perhaps so; but not if the Prussian chiefs have their way. The wretched juggle about the language, and the old possessions of the Reich, the whole antiquarian twaddle about Elsass and Lothringen, form only one of Bismarck's tricks to amuse the bookworms; who, good, silly souls, are flapping their wings with the glee they would feel if some one turned up the real sword of Barbarossa, or proposed to revive the worship of Odin. "The sword of Barbarossa!" cry the learned geese, "es lebe der Kaiser! let us try if it will cut off men's heads. Oh, beautifully! See how they fly off, and how the corpses writhe! Lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig seyn!" So do the professors rejoice exceedingly. For political childishness and social immorality no one comes near your true Dryasdust. So

throughout all Germany Teufelsdröckh, with immense glee, is airing the biographies of the Imperial vassals. Then, again, all the learned strategic stuff about the line of the Vosges, and the indispensability of this, and the importance of that to the defence of Fatherland, and the mysterious references to the omniscient Moltke, are just another amusement for the journalists and soldiers at home. Mephistopheles, who is as relentless as he is artful, laughs his harsh laugh. Bah! let the pedants bring home their lost German brothers, with hoch-Teutsch lays, and the wiseacres discuss the defensive powers of the new German frontier; are the real chiefs of Prussia the men to play these academic pranks, or fight for what they have got fifty times over? Their real end is a very plain one—the annihilation of France as an independent Power.

Jugglery about language-boundaries and strategic frontiers (in its defensive sense) will soon be swept aside, and the real purpose of Prussian policy will soon be disclosed—such a settlement as will leave France prostrate before Germany. Bismarck swore to drive Austria out of Germany. He has done it, and she clings still struggling to its borders. Bismarck and his captains have sworn, too, to drive France (practically) out of Europe. And, if they have their will, they will not rest till they have done it. That is what the language-boundary and the Vosges line, in sober truth, comes to at last; and what is to prevent them from insisting on it? The heads of the military caste in Prussia feel towards France what the Roman aristocracy felt towards Carthage. *Delenda est Carthago* is their policy, and old Blücher was their Cato. The pedants may go on maundering most beautifully about Teutonic civilisation; but the caste will pursue their end as coolly as if the said pedants were actual, as well as metaphorical, bookworms.

The most dreadful part of all this is that peace, even on any terms now demanded by Germany, is not a peace, but a truce. We have it on the best possible authority, that of Count Bismarck. In his cynical frankness, he told us that he knew that France would renew the conflict, and he only wanted a position of superiority to meet it. The truth is that it suits neither the welfare nor the policy of Prussia to complete the destruction of France at once. Place her in a situation of overwhelming mastery, and she would prefer to take her own time. Prussia did not swallow Denmark at one mouthful, nor drive Austria from Germany entirely in the seven weeks' war. But she has planted herself in such a position that she can deal with Denmark or deal with Austria much as she pleases; and she is assuredly about to do so. With such a settlement as Prussia exacts from France, she can begin again, and finish her task whenever she pleases. There was a first, a second, and a third partition of Poland, arranged at convenient intervals, without too exhausting efforts. And there was a first, and a second, and a third Punic war. As Rome dealt with Carthage, as Prussia dealt with Poland, and as she has since dealt with Austria, so will Count Bismarck deal with France. It might be too hard a task, Europe might be alarmed, if all were done at a blow. But, once place Prussia upon the prostrate body of disarmed France, and the rest is a question of time. No one can imagine, even in the most maudlin hour of optimism, that France can long endure such a lot. Her two millions of oppressed citizens, her sense of helplessness, and the intolerable weight of humiliation, will goad her in some evil hour to a fresh desperate effort. She will rush to arms again like the Poles, or the Carthaginians, without a chance, and almost without a hope; and

with a like result. A nation of forty millions of men are not thrust from their ancient place in the world by one war, however crushing; nor are races nowadays partitioned and annexed in a single campaign, however triumphant. The seizure of Silesia was a splendid feat of arms, and Austria was crushed for the time. But even in that age Frederick well knew that it was but a truce, to be followed as certainly as night follows day by the Seven Years' War. And France is more than Austria, as Alsace and Lorraine are more than Silesia. And so Frederick's successor tells Europe, with the harsh laugh, what, indeed, we know, and hear with a shudder, that even this horrible war is but the first act; and when he makes peace it will be nothing but a truce.[1]

The prospect, then, which the statesmen of Europe have before them is this:—This fearful war is but the beginning of an epoch of war; it is, in fact, but a first campaign. A new Polish question, a new Venetian subject-province, is established on far larger proportions, and in the centre of Europe. The population to be torn from France is even more patriotic and more warlike than are either Venetians or Poles. And certainly France is stronger than Austria, and occupies a more central position. But this is not merely a question of subjecting a province to foreign rule; it is exposing the nation from which it is torn to permanent helplessness. It is easy to say that Austria gave up Venetia, the kingdom of the Netherlands gave up Belgium, Italy ceded Savoy, and Denmark Schleswig-Holstein. These examples in no case apply. In all of them the ceded provinces were

[1] We all know now how this danger was averted—or perhaps only arrested—by the marvellous recovery of France, and largely by the interposition of Russia. We know how a renewal of the war in 1875 was prevented by the act of the Czar and Queen Victoria. I wish I could think the danger now passed (1908).

not a source of strength, but of weakness. They lay outside the true area of the nation which ceded them, and belonged by many ties to the nation that received them. In the case of Alsace and Lorraine, all these circumstances are reversed. They form an integral part of France, socially, economically, and geographically; in every sense except in some wretched antiquarian pretence that could be found in any case. They can only be torn from France by the sword, and retained by oppression. And to tear them from France is to expose her to standing helplessness. The true parallel to the case is simply this:—What would England be if Hampshire and Sussex were annexed to a foreign country, whose armies were posted in a network of arsenals and strongholds along their entire sea-coast.

We hear it thoughtlessly said:—"Well, other nations have ceded provinces, and lost territory; why is it so terrible for France to do the like, or for Frenchmen to change their nationality?" It is sufficient to say that in every case in this nineteenth century in which provinces have been ceded, with the exception of Nice (which is yet a standing menace to Europe), it has been done in the name of nationality, and not in defiance of it. Colonies, alienated provinces, and the like, have been ceded; but in no single case has a vital and integral part of a nation, and one of its most intensely national centres, been cut out of its very trunk. For deliberate violation of national right this case stands, therefore, alone in the history of the nineteenth century, or paralleled only in the case of Poland. It is not the cession of a province, but the dismemberment of a nation. It is annexation on a scale and of a character unexampled in more modern times. To find its parallel we must go back to other centuries.

Be it observed that the sentiment of nationality is the birth of recent times; sprung, in fact, from the Revolution. In the old days of dynastic wars nations in our sense hardly existed, or existed only in England and France. The principal kingdoms consisted of bundles of duchies, fiefs, and principalities, with little sense of national coherence. To transfer them from one sovereign to another may have weakened the power of the ruler, yet it was but a small shock to the feelings of the population transferred, and hardly any to the other lieges of the sovereign to whom they ceased to belong. Cession of provinces, as the result of war, was then a dynastic and feudal question, and may have had some reason; for national rights hardly existed. One German savant, in that spirit of grotesque chicanery which this war has developed in that ingenious body, has told us that it is quite *immoral* to end a war without cession of territory. Others have deluged us from their note-books with instances from the history of the House of Capet or the House of Hapsburg. Antiquarian rubbish! The intense spirit of nationality has revolutionised these matters entirely. It is but of recent birth, but it is now one of the prime movers of the European system. *Guai a chi la tocca.* Barbarossa may indeed awake, but if he venture to recast Europe with the mediæval notions with which he went down into his tomb, more especially if he attempt it in France, democratised and nationalised, and in the enthusiasm of a new Republican spirit, this weird phantom of a dead past will be plunging the nations of our time into a new era of revolution and war.

A very eminent historian has lately put forward a defence for this and other acts of the Prussian monarchy, by comparing it with what was done by

Plantagenet or Tudor kings in England, and by the House of Capet in France. One would think it was only necessary to be an historian, to set aside the principles on which modern nations depend for their existence. Why the very charge against the Prussian dynasty and its advisers is, that they are carrying into modern policy those violent and unjust practices of old times, which it is the function of modern civilisation to repudiate and to repress. They are simply Tudors and Capets in the nineteenth century; and that is what the nineteenth century will never endure. The attempt to repeat the process by which dynasties of old formed nations is the worst of all offences now against the rights and peace of nations. It is precisely because the Prussian monarch belongs to an era and a caste which has learnt nothing and forgotten nothing, that he is outraging the conscience of modern Europe, and perpetrating a wrong against nations, more fatal than any other since the revolutionary wars, and against which the modern world must remain in permanent insurrection.

Let us now consider the position of England at the close of this war. France, from the necessity of the case, will be so much exhausted and humiliated, that independent action in Europe would be in any case impossible to her. But that she is feeble will be the least part of the case. She will be so completely at the mercy of Germany, that for the present she must cease to count as one of the Great Powers. When diplomacy has finished the work of war, she will not dare to profess a policy contrary to that of Prussia. She will not be in the position of Russia at the close of the Crimean war, exhausted, but powerful and independent. She will be like Poland after the first partition, or like Piedmont after Novara, at the mercy of an enemy who can march at any moment on her

defenceless capital. She must, therefore, for any practical purpose retire from the councils of Europe, or enter them, as now, for the purpose only of making her indignation heard, of fomenting discord, or of grasping at any ally at almost any price.[1]

The problem that English statesmen have to face is, how to maintain our position in Europe when France has ceased to be an element in the question. Let them look back for one or two generations, and weigh the importance of those interests in which England and France were as one. Ever since the days of the Holy Alliance, and the recovery from the great spasm of the Revolutionary war, no fact in the history of Europe has been more marked than the growing tendency towards union in the policy of France and England. In spite of dynastic or ministerial intrigues, gradually for forty years it has been growing more clear that in France and in England the weight of the popular feeling marched onwards in parallel lines, and that France and England stood out as the guarantees in the long run for progress and for right. England and France were felt by all to be great powers, second to none in material strength ; the one supposed to be supreme by sea and the other by land, whilst they were the only states in Europe where the liberal feeling of the nation had strength to prevent their respective Governments from long continuing on the wrong side.

During the last generation there have been four great questions of European importance. In all or these France and England, in the main, had a common purpose. In the question of Turkey and the East,

[1] This imminent danger was averted, first, by the extraordinary power of recuperation by France, a power which astonished and alarmed Bismarck, and next, by the strange alliance with Russia—even less to be foreseen—an alliance which had the tacit approval of England (1908).

disfigured as their action was by private jealousies, they at least concurred in this: both England and France were opposed to the absorption of Turkey in the Muscovite empire, and both favoured the *status quo* in the East as the least disturbing issue possible. In the key of the English policy, the French on the whole agreed—that the Eastern Mediterranean should not become the prey either of anarchy or of the Czar. During the Crimean war that alliance was deepened and confirmed; and since the taking of Sebastopol there has grown up a tacit acknowledgment, too often not justified by facts, that in the long run England and France were the representatives of the cause of national independence, in the Mediterranean as well as in the Baltic.

The case of Poland came next. And to whom did Poland look in spite of repeated disappointment—to whom could she look—but to England and to France? There again the policy of our two nations, emphatically of both peoples, and mainly of both Governments, has worked together. And though on no single occasion has the Government of both agreed on any common plan of active intervention, their assistance has not been wholly in vain; and their moral support has enabled the Poles to maintain their national traditions under all the tyranny of the Eastern despotisms.

Throughout the whole of this period there existed the Italian question; and here again, in spite of the insincere policy of Napoleon, the French and the English people heartily concurred. With the ruler of France, and sections of Frenchmen, selfish interests held the foremost place; but no one can doubt that it was by the persistent support which the French and the English nation gave to the principles of national right, that Italy has at length regained her independence.

Then came the Danish war, the first beginning of that career of aggression which is now triumphing in France. Here again the French people and the English were entirely as one. And though the French ministry, but lately rebuffed on the Polish question, declined (as we now know) to join the English in active operations, the mere fact of a proposal of the kind having passed between them, is a proof how closely the two countries felt the cause of independence to be violated by the attempt to partition Denmark, and how much their joint support contributed to save her from utter extinction.

In the East the fleets and armies of France and England have acted even more directly in concert. But I abstain from making any use of the arguments to be found in the support which England has received from France in Asia. In neither case do I believe the interference to have been for the good of civilisation, though perhaps it was rendered less injurious to it by the presence of two rival nations in concert. I freely admit that there have been many questions in which the French nation has been opposed to the English, and still more frequently their Government to ours. It is sufficient to point out that in the four principal questions which have deeply stirred Europe within this generation, the French nation had joint interests and sympathies with our own, and were actuated by the same principles to follow a common policy.

Even when, as is too true, the wretched Government of Napoleon, and at times the French people, engaged in or tended towards a course fatal to progress and peace, and hostile to our common traditions, the English policy and public opinion have been able to modify and control those of France by virtue of the sense of our many common interests. In the Italian

question, in the American civil war, in the Danubian questions, in the Mexican interference, and even in the Luxemburg difficulty in 1867, where the miserable ambition of the Imperial dynasty was embarked on a retrograde course, the moral strength of England has exercised a most salutary control, and gained an ultimate ascendency for right, by virtue of its being felt by the French people to represent the voice of an honest and genuine friend. Looking at it broadly, as national policy alone can be looked at, and seeking only for what is fundamental, a fair mind will allow that the co-operation of France with England has been a solid and a great fact; that the alliance has been on the whole a real thing, and an alliance in the main for good.

It is all over now; and where are we to find its like? On all these four typical questions of European policy, whilst France at heart was with us and with the right, Prussia, the new mistress of Europe, was against us and with the wrong. In the Crimean war she threw her undisguised sympathies and her secret influence on the side of Muscovite aggression. In the Polish question she played into the hands of the oppressors, for is she not one of the standing oppressors herself? In the Italian question she joined her cause with Austria, and declared for the permanent enslavement of Italy by German bayonets. Nay, more, in 1859, she declared Venetia a strategic question for Germany, though for her own ends, in 1866, she found means to surrender it. Of the Danish question it is needless to speak, for she was the author and head of that wanton spoliation. On all these great questions, in which England stood forth with France as the guardian of right and respect for nations, she will find herself now face to face with that gigantic Despotism which is the very

embodiment of the wrong; and she will find herself before that Power—alone.[1]

Condemn, as we may, the national faults of France, denounce, as we please, their pretension to supremacy in Europe (a pretension exactly equivalent to that which England makes to maritime supremacy), we must still feel that in no other nation does there exist a public opinion so akin to our own, and at the same time so completely in the ascendant. The heart of the great French nation beats with that of our own, and we feel its pulsations in every workshop and every cottage of the land. The true modern life breathes in both of us equally: the same generous sympathies, the same faith in progress, the like yearning for a social regeneration of the West. And France, we feel, has been truly passed through the Revolution: the social rule of caste, the dead-weight of feudal institutions, the organised reaction, has passed away from them, far more than from us, and certainly far more than from any other people in Europe. Anarchy and tyranny in turn afflict them for a season; but we know that in France the reign of neither can be long. We feel that in spite of repeated failures and errors, and the misdeeds of rulers, there still lives the great French people, animated by noble ideas, the slaves of no caste and of no system, who in the long run are always, and are worthy to be, the masters of the destinies of France.

It is so now, and it has been so in the past. The true history of France, seen in the light of a broad survey of the annals of mankind, is the history of a nation which has been in the van of progress. She who led Europe in the Crusades to resist the aggression

[1] Happily, in the present reign things are changed. The fears of 1871 are modified—not extinct—in 1908. The doubtful hopes of 1871 are almost now real facts (1908).

of the Saracen; she who built up the great central monarchy in Europe out of feudal chaos, and inaugurated the institutions of modern government out of the antique armoury of chivalry; she who kept at bay the bigotry and tyranny which once menaced Europe from Hapsburg ambition, rose out of a century and a half of restless thought and evil policy into the Revolution, which, with all its crimes, was the new birth of modern society. In the true philosophy of history, it is France who (often backsliding, and often the enemy of right) has been in the main foremost in the cause of civilisation. Let us leave it to half-crazy pedants to represent her as the evil destiny of nations. Men who have grown purblind and anti-social whilst working deep down in the stifling mines of German records, see the good spirit of mankind in the wild and valorous doings of panoplied Rittmeisters; of the Grafs and Kaisers who prolonged the Middle Ages down into the sixteenth or the seventeenth century. The good sense of mankind has long agreed that the great French nation holds a precious part in the history of civilisation; a part which she held of old, and holds still: her place no other can supply.[1]

We need not thereby deny the great and noble qualities of other races in Europe, much less of the massive and energetic German people. But the good sense of Englishmen is agreed that nowhere (for America distinctly stands aloof from Continental questions) do they find, as they do in the French, a people combining the same sympathies and interests as their own, with so high a power of giving them effect. How can the new German Empire supply that place? How can the free and peaceful policy of England look

[1] It has needed more than thirty years for English statesmen thoroughly to realise this. Events in the late decade have forced it on them (1908).

for its right hand to the Prussian dynasty and its military chiefs? The Hohenzollern monarchy has traditions more unchanged and rooted than any house in Europe. They are traditions of national aggrandisement, of military power, of royal prerogative, and divine right. It represents, and is proud of representing, the despotic, warlike, retrograde forces of Europe. The key of its policy has been common cause with Russia. Its aim has been to broaden the foundations of its own ascendency. Not a single liberal movement in Europe has ever found in it a friend; not one service to civilisation or to peace can it boast. Its great pride has been that, alone of the five great Powers, it has upheld unbending the old royalty and chivalry as it existed before the Revolution. Such is the Power with which the Parliamentary Ministers of this free English nation are to form their future alliances, or to whose will they are to bow in submission. The scared Ministers of "happy England" do not lift up the eyes to dream of an alliance with the successor of Barbarossa; but they are offering him their homage at Versailles, as if the House of Guelf were one of the mediatised princes.[1]

Optimists, with a tincture of German literature, are fond of assuring us that however little hope civilisation can find in the Hohenzollern dynasty, the great German people will set all right in their own good time. Far be it from us to deny the admirable qualities of the German people, more especially their high cultivation of all sorts, and their splendid intellectual gifts. Professors, with a naïve enthusiasm, rehearse the tale of Teutonic literature, science, and art; grow maudlin over the domestic virtues of the German home; and celebrate it as the nursery of the best of fathers and the truest of friends. Well

[1] We sing a very different song to-day (1908).

and good; but the question is what has the Prussian dynasty done for the peace of Europe? A race may have the highest intellectual and personal gifts, and yet not as a nation have consciously assumed any great international function. After all, the value of a nation in the common councils depends on its social forces, on its consciousness of public duties, rather than on its intellectual brilliancy. In their later ages the Greeks, with their matchless mental gifts, were of almost no account as a nation; whilst the Romans, in cultivation far their inferiors, were foremost by the ascendency of their national genius. The real strength of a nation, especially in these days, consists not in its achievements in science or art, but in the degree to which its national will can command the sympathies and give shape to the wants of the age. This is now the only claim which a nation can possess to the supremacy amongst nations. And it is this which Germany is yet too inorganic, too much encumbered with the débris of the past, and too little conscious of national duty, reasonably to assert.

Worthy and enlightened souls as the good German burghers are in many relations of life, socially and politically they are what we in the West of Europe, or what Americans, call, decidedly backward. They have a wonderful army, a consummate administration, a high-pressure educational machinery, an omniscient press, and a number of other surprising social productions, but, with all that, they have not the true political genius. They still live under a grotesque medley of antiquated princelets, who are not, like our monarchy and aristocracy, modernised into the mere heads of society, but are living remnants of feudal chieftainship. The rule of these princes still rests on divine right, on vassal devotion, and military subordination. It is buttressed round by the serried ranks of a

social hierarchy, also feudal in its pretensions and in its strength, not like our own, modernised and transformed to the uses of a democratic society, but standing in all the naked antiquity of its preposterous pride. Society, therefore, in Germany, is heavily oppressed by the superincumbent mass of strata upon strata of old-world orders and venerable institutions, habits, and ideas, of which a great free and progressive people, as we here understand it, would never endure the weight.

There is, therefore, in Prussia no true public opinion. Politics are discussed with unfathomable profundity, and the press peers into public affairs with well-regulated curiosity ; but for true influence on the policy of Prussia the people of Prussia count nothing. An eminent encomiast of the German empire has but recently acknowledged that, great as the proportions of the new edifice will prove, it will still want some of the modern improvements of the State fabric. It will not be (of course) a constitutional affair, it is not intended to be a parliamentary government, there is no idea of having ministerial responsibility, or of public opinion controlling the army or the finances of the State. For my part I am not enamoured of our present form of parliamentary government ; but I do maintain that a government which is in no sense to be the organ of public opinion, is not a free and not a progressive government. The Prussian régime is not one which has passed beyond a parliamentary system, but one which has never reached it. It looks upon the voice of the nation as Tudors or Stuarts looked at it, as something which may offer respectful comments, but is never to exercise control. This is the ideal of government which accords with every tradition of the house of Hohenzollern, which is maintained by the yet unshaken strength of a social system

pledged to defend it by pride as much as by interest, which the middle-class Prussian accepts by every habit of his nature, and worships with instinctive idolatry. It will be a revolution only that can shake it.

But the true character of this Hohenzollern dynasty is determined by that "peculiar institution" of Prussia, the Junker class. It is a phenomenon to which no parallel exists in Europe, a genuine aristocratic military caste. It is not like our own aristocracy, rich, peaceful, and half-bourgeois. It is not like the French imperial army, a mere staff of officers, with no local or social influence. It is not like the Spanish order of Grandees, an effete body of incapables. It is an order of men knit together by all the ties of family pride and interest; with an historic social influence; with a high education, and a strong nature of a special sort; rich enough to have local power both in town and country; and yet so poor as to depend for existence on the throne — and with all this, devoted passionately, necessarily, to war. It is a caste, which an aspiring dynasty has moulded out of the Ritters and Grafs of mediæval Germany. The Williams and Fredericks, with their strong hand, have taken the fierce old lanz-knecht and his children, given him a scanty manor and a soldier's pension, drilled him into the best soldier in the world, tutored him in the absolute science of destruction, given him two watchwords — "King" and "God" — and kept him for every other purpose a simple mediæval knight. He is now the ideal of the scientific soldier, always a gallant, often a cultivated man, but in this industrial and progressive age, an anachronism. Scratch the Junker, and you will find the Lanz-Knecht. We have nothing to compare with him, though he reminds one a little of the Rajpoot caste in Oude, or the Japanese Daimio and his Ronins. The last time these islands

saw his like, was when Charles Edward led his Highland chieftains on their raid. The difference is, that the Junker is a social and political power, civilised in all the material sides to the last point of modern science. Morally and socially, in all that we look for in peace and progress, he is as abnormal and foreign an element as if Fergus McIvor were amongst us with his claymore.

It was the fashion (not unnaturally) to treat this order as of small political account. But they have now thrown up their man of genius, they are the true masters of the situation, and they have embarked their King on a new career, in which he will be unable to stop. Count Bismarck has found how this caste may make itself a necessity for the nation, how it can step forward as the right arm to work out the national dream, and in the name of Nationality and Peace may found a new military supremacy. He has done with profounder craft what Napoleon did at the close of last century, and has debauched the spirit of patriotic defence into a thirst for glory and domination. Who thought in 1792 that the acclaims of Frenchmen for universal philanthropy (more passionate and real than those of German eruditi in 1870) were destined to glide, step by step, into the sanguinary vanity of the Napoleonic wars? At every move in the game of ambition, the self-love of the people and the degradation of the army grew with an equal growth. Like Napoleon, Bismarck must go on, feeding an Empire of military supremacy by fresh pretensions.

The situation is so unreal that it must be sustained by further crimes. The Empire, threatened already by the people, must rest on the vast soldier caste; to reward and stimulate that soldier caste, fresh aliment must be found for its soldier pride. Russia, Austria, France, must some day look askance, even if our

merchants still smirk before the new Empire, with a tradesman's bow. To maintain an attitude founded upon wrong, fresh wrongs must be ventured. The weight of the new Despotism, threatened from its birth both at home and abroad, must tell on the deluded German people. And to repress their opposition, their national vanity must be fed with fresh stimulants, or their efforts swallowed up in a new convulsion. Bismarck plays with Fatherland to the German burgher, as Napoleon I. played the Coalition to the bourgeois of France, or Napoleon III. the Spectre Rouge. As to the chiefs of the German army, and its whole officer class, war is their profession, and their social monopoly. They no more desire peace than the lawyer desires to close courts of justice, or the Roman patrician desired to close the Temple of Janus. A military Empire now has but one career to run—that of Napoleon I.—that of Napoleon III. Those States who take the sword for their title, must perish by the sword.

The new Empire of Germany is thus, in its origin, a menace to Europe. The house of Hohenzollern, with its traditions of aggrandisement, with its consummate bureaucratic machinery, and its bodyguard of a warlike caste, can never be the titular chief of peaceful industrial German kingdoms. It is no case of chance personal despotism, or mushroom revolutionary adventurer. It is a great power, whose roots go deep into every pore of the two upper classes of German society. It is arbitrary, military, fanatical. In one word, it is the enemy of modern progress. Though not representing the German people, it has debauched and masters the German people. Six months of this gigantic war have turned the flower of the German citizens into professional troopers. The very fact that they have as a nation submitted to the military yoke,

the fact that every German is a soldier, is itself a proof of a lower type of civilisation, and marks them as a nation capable of becoming a curse to their neighbours.

It is not necessary to suppose that this new power has any distinct vision of further conquests, or universal dominion. It is quite sufficient calamity to Europe that such a power should possess paramount supremacy. It may be the good German souls are right, and that neither they nor the Empire, which is another thing, mean any harm. But why are the nations to depend for existence on the forbearance of their mighty neighbour? And if we are safe, are all the smaller states safe? The one thing which is now the dream of the North German is a great navy and power at sea.[1] To this end the very friends of Prussia admit that Continental Denmark is necessary for her. The inevitable result of such a career as that of Prussia is, that she must seek to be the mistress of the Baltic. She will begin by coercing, and end by absorbing all who stand in her way. As to Holland, every step in affairs brings her nearer and nearer to the inevitable fate. And England will yet come to see that she must stand alone to defend the existence, to guarantee the independence of those industrious, friendly kingdoms along the northern seas, or consent to see them made the instruments of a new and far nearer Russia.

In the centre and South of Europe, Prussia, if this war close with her undisputed triumph, can arrange everything at her own good pleasure. The question of the Danube, the very existence of Turkey,[2] hang upon her favour, and will be determined by her interests. For as the first-fruits of the new supremacy,

[1] This forecast of 1871 has a very different meaning in 1908. In 1871 the German navy was a *quantité négligéable*.

[2] The Sultan has long found the German Empire his best—his only friend. Thus secured, he has a free hand in crime (1908).

Austria, who at first was calling out for English support, is for very life drawing near in obsequious deference to the conqueror. Italy may at any moment be ordered to restore or to satisfy the Pope. And Switzerland finds herself surrounded by a new danger. With a power so tremendous, and an ambition so ruthless, as that which Prussia has exhibited, everything is possible, and every nation is unsafe. But the matter for us is not so much whether Prussia will overrun Europe, or swallow up this or that smaller nation. All that is for the future; but what is in the present, our actual calamity, is this: the greatest shock of this century has been given to the principle of national rights; the black flag of conquest has been unfurled by a dominant power; one nation has gained a supremacy in arms which puts the security of every other at her sufferance, and that a nation directed by a policy against which every free people is in permanent revolt.

Such is the result which an English Government has watched gathering up for six months, now with an air of Pharisaical neutrality, now with a flood of pulpit good advice. European politics form a world in which the forces are tremendous. To cope with them are needed great insight and resolute natures, and not fluent tongues. Statesmen need something to deal with them more solid than pretty essays; they can be touched only by deeds, and not by words. No nation can stand apart, gaping on in maudlin hymns to its own exceeding good fortune, or pouring out its eloquent laments over the naughtiness of its neighbours. If the foundation of a great military empire, overshadowing all Europe, be in truth a good thing, let us make it the new basis of our foreign policy, and not crawl like mere courtiers to the conqueror's footstool. But if it be a bad thing, and a danger to us and to the

common peace, by all the traditions of the British race let us throw our whole force to prevent its triumph. Act; for act you must; to stand still is to be on its side. Act with your moral force, if you please, since we are told that England has no physical force left; act even with your moral force, for that may yet be something. Have a policy, declare it, and act on it.

It is impossible to be morally neutral. If you mean well to the conqueror, stand up and preach sermons upon peace; for that is to truckle to the stronger. If you do not see his triumph with delight, you must show him so with something stronger than affectionate remonstrance or copy-book exhortations to keep the Ten Commandments. Nations in this wicked world are seldom amenable to moral lectures, and a nation flushed with glory and ambition can be touched by nothing but the fear of retribution. When England stands by, and sees, without moving, the whole face of Europe transformed and a new principle enthroned amongst nations, she is virtually its accomplice. A great nation, in spite of itself, must play a part. It cannot stand by, like a field-preacher, at a street-fight, crying out with benevolent imbecility—"My friends, keep clear of those wicked men! Wicked men, shake hands and be friends!" To offer good counsels to Prussia is to become her plaything, or her parasite. You might as well throw tracts and hymn-books at a tiger.

"What can we do?" cries that cynical No-Policy with which the governing classes have contrived to gild and to satisfy the gross selfishness of the trader. "What!" sneers the organ of the money-dealers, "are we for the balance of power and intervention in this latter half of the nineteenth century?" If to have national interests and duties, and to act for the maintenance of those interests, and in defence of

rights, if this be intervention, it has not yet ceased to be the policy of this country, and let us trust it never will. England has continually intervened when it seemed to be her interest and her right. She intervened in 1854 to protect Turkey from absorption; she is intervening at this moment for the same end; she intervened but the other day to preserve Belgium. She intervened persistently and effectively against the retrograde oppression of the old Austrian empire. Her policy in Asia is one perpetual and restless intervention. As to the balance of power, if the pedantic and jealous adherence to the *status quo* was a source of danger and of wrong, which the good sense of our time has rejected, there is a sense in which it is an invaluable safeguard against the preponderance of power.

It is true still, that it will be a dark day for Europe when any one Power shall hold the rest in the hollow of its mailed hand. If it was a menace to Europe when the House of Hapsburg or of Capet threatened to absorb half Europe, if it was an European calamity when Napoleon ruled from Berlin to Madrid, so it will be the knell of peace and liberty when the triumphant Empire of Germany bestrides the Continent without an equal. If it succeed in doing so it will be the act of England, who stands by, trading and sermonising, selling arms but using none, "bellum cauponantes, non belligerantes," droning out homilies and betraying every duty of a nation. It will be the crowning proof of the degradation of those governing orders who have bought power by subservience to the traders, and surrendered the traditions of their ancestors; that they who can make war at the bidding of a knot of merchants, and call Europe into conference for some supposed commercial interest, have nothing in this, the greatest revolution in the State system of modern Europe, but a policy of

absolute abnegation; a policy which thoughtful politicians know to be suicidal, and the mass of the people feel to be shameful; the policy which the new Emperor of the West told them with a gibe, as they came bowing to his court, was the only policy that remained for them—the policy of effacement.

January 17, 1871.

III

FRANCE AFTER WAR

(*June* 1874)

The following Essay was written in May 1874, and was published in the Fortnightly Review *of that year* (*vol. xv.*). *At the time the whole of the* milliards (£200,000,000) *had been paid by France, and her territory evacuated by Germany. A fierce struggle under the "Marshalate" was being carried on by De Broglie and the Bonapartists against the Republicans, led by Thiers and Gambetta. The political parties and the National Assembly were torn by monarchist and imperialist intrigues, and the existence of the Republican form hung doubtfully on the divisions of the reactionary sections. In the meantime the German chiefs were contemplating a fresh invasion, which became imminent in the following year, 1875. The peril of the Republic, and even of France, was extreme* (*1908*).

MANIFOLD and subtle are the theories propounded to account for the evils which have fallen upon France. It is a subject to exercise our powers of invention, and to gratify our sense of morality; so that every man has an explanation of his own, which differs with his politics, his habits, or his creed. Democracy, despotism, Dumas, pilgrimages, Voltaire, absinthe, Malthus, or *bals-masqués* are the theories chiefly in favour. Yet

there is, one would think, an explanation before our eyes quite as simple, and far more complete. If we miss it, it is only because it is too familiar to us, so manifest that we are apt to forget its presence—that it towers above like a mountain, whilst we are staring at the foreground. That grand cause of all is simply the Revolution, still in the course of its long agony. Often as it happens that we cannot see the wood for the trees, it was never more so than when things which are but the undergrowth of the Revolution prevent us from seeing the Revolution itself.

Rightly to judge the condition of France, the first thing is to recognise that she is still in the crisis of organic revolution. It is too late to moralise or complain over this obvious fact. We might as well reproach our first parents with the Fall of man. And it is idle to inveigh against evils which are the inevitable results of the revolutionary state, when we have made up our minds that the revolution itself must be accepted. It was an unlucky piece of hypercriticism in a great master of logic when he said that the term revolution meant nothing definite or real. The Revolution, at any rate in France, is the most real fact of our age. The Revolution is the change from the feudal to the industrial phase of society, from the aristocratic to the republican form of government, from the Church and terrorism to good sense and humanity. It is transforming at once ideas, habits, institutions, nations, and societies. Under it the national sentiment is taking a new departure, partly widening into that of the great community of the people, partly intensifying itself in the form of local republicanism.

Under the same influence the struggle of the people for political and social emancipation makes everything spasmodic and provisional. When we see

constitution after constitution torn to pieces in France, it is simply that the Revolution has left the great fight of classes still undecided. If anarchical insurrections are succeeded by murderous tyrannies, it is the Revolution raging in the death-grapple of two types of society. If government seems paralysed and dissolved into a Babel of changing impulses, it is simply the ebb and flow of the revolutionary battle. The cross-purpose, the dead-lock, the ceaseless repetition, the round-and-round restlessness of politics in France, are nothing but the sway of parties in this secular contest. To complain of it is as idle as to complain of the smoke and of the dead and dying in a battle. There stand face to face two great principles, which all modern history has been preparing; it is a struggle in which all nations are more or less sharing, but which in its acutest form is concentrated in France; it is a struggle which cannot be fought out either soon or gently, for it claims generations of men, infinite destruction, suffering, and death. On this issue hang the most momentous consequences for evil and for good, for France and for Europe; and its effects are so grand and so inevitable that it is useless to dilate upon the trivialities, the confusions, the corruptions, the follies, the helplessness, which are but its symptoms and concomitants.

The great war and the great overthrow which we have lately witnessed in France are but an episode in the greater civil war. France marched upon the Rhine in the mere delirium of civil war; she lies prostrate before Germany in the exhaustion of civil war, because civil war had almost dissolved her as a nation. Parties and classes within her hate and fear each other more than the invader. National spirit has been broken, because the national sentiment itself has been made a new weapon of civil war. Religion

is used as a means of party victory, and, in the language of the day, the *Bon Dieu* has become a deputy, and sits on the Extreme Right. So far from its being matter of wonder that France should be weak, divided, and restless, it would be wonderful if she were not. The real wonder is that she exists as a nation at all, and that her political mechanism still works as a whole in the midst of these social battles. Nations engaged in civil war are always distracted and changeful, and usually a prey to their neighbours; and it is so far to the credit of the French people that they are carrying on their social war without actual fighting or material anarchy.

The nations of Europe, who from the comparative calm of their national unity point the finger of scorn at France, should at least remember that the evils which she endures have an origin in European even more than in French causes. That is to say, the problems which her people have to solve, the social war which she is battling through, and the desperate parties and principles within her, are common to all parts of civilised Europe, and are fed by European resources. For various reasons these great social crises are brought to their acutest and earliest phases in France. But the issues are being fought out for Europe, and are envenomed and protracted by European entanglements. France is the first of the great nations of Europe which has resolutely faced and all but solved the crucial problem involved in passing from the feudal to the republican society. She is the first which has set herself avowedly to cast off the old skin of Catholic hypocrisy. And she is the first which has taken as her political basis the social recognition of the mass of the people. These three problems, complex as they are, might have been settled by France long ago had she stood alone. The

obstinacy of the contest is promoted by the moral and often the material interference of forces in the rest of Europe.

France by herself had long ago silenced the remnants of the monarchical and the feudal factions; but they keep the field by the immense moral support which they receive from the consolidated forces of monarchy and feudalism still dominant in Europe. By herself, France would long ago have reduced her ultramontane Catholics to a powerless sect, were it not that Europe and the world still arm them with fanatical fury against her. Thus also alone she would have settled the task of the social incorporation of the people, were it not that her privileged and propertied classes fight with the desperation of an advanced guard, which sees itself supported and encouraged by the unbroken ranks of the privileged in other countries around them. Were France transported bodily to the other side of the Atlantic, it would be short work with monarchy, feudality, church, and privilege. She suffers and heaves, and is torn in pieces by her own children as by strangers, because she has flung herself first into a movement for which Europe is not ready, but where Europe yet must follow her; and as she struggles onward towards a new and more human social order, she has to make head against the feudalisms and the sacerdotalisms of Europe, against the class-passions, the bigotry, the valetdom, the clericdom of the world.

In this great revolution the last few years have witnessed the most extraordinary change. The deepest political fact of our time, the most critical of the last two generations, is the fact that since the fall of the empire the mass of the French peasantry have definitely ranged themselves on the side of the republic. Now, the French peasantry are the great

majority of French citizens; the territorial system has freed them from all local dictation, and the political system has made them feel independence and power. The mass of the French peasantry, in the material sense, are France; and they know it. They were the bone and blood of the uprising of '93; they filled the armies which threw back the kings, and followed them over every country of Europe; they decreed the revival of the empire in 1852; and they bore the suffering and the slaughter of the invasion of 1870. They are not an heroic, not a brilliant, not a generous order. They have neither the genius nor the magnanimity, and happily none of the fury, which have often fired the Paris workmen. Their virtues are of a soberer, duller kind; they are patient, enduring, cautious, frugal, critical. They are very tough, very slow to persuade, very suspicious of the new, full of worldly wisdom, and as obstinate as overdriven mules; and from their numbers, their homogeneity, their impassibility, they are very strong, and feel that they are very strong. Who that has ever watched the canny Norman peasant on his patrimony, has failed to read the unlimited caution, grit, and patience of the man? Who that has ever studied the French peasant's fireside, the fireside of Sand and Hugo, of Millet and of Frère, has failed to perceive that, narrow, dull, and penurious as it might be, it is the home of a citizen—of a citizen who has no master? That man will ponder slowly over things, doubt, suspect, and think mainly of himself. He will often be wrong, unjust, and selfish; but when he gives his vote, he will give it as a man who intends to make it good, and knows that he can make it good.

For generations now he has looked upon the town citizen as his principal enemy, as a man whose

atheism is needlessly obtrusive, and whose socialism is an unpardonable sin. For generations his political life has aimed at restraining the town workman; and for him the town workman has been embodied in the republic. Hence, he gave France the first empire, and in our day the second empire. But a great change has come over him, in its own way perhaps the greatest change of this century. For the first time in modern French history the peasant and the town workman have been brought together into line. Widely as they differ in their view of its form, though the one means a conservative *bourgeoisie*, scarcely differing from the English monarchy, and the other a democratic dictatorship, both peasant and workman are at one in demanding the republic. Nor is it a mere toleration of the republic that the peasant is prepared for: it is a settled conviction and instinct.

To him the republic is now the conservative, safe, and moderate institution; it is identified with property; it represents order, it gives a dignity to the country without, and puts an end to civil war within. The parties which seem to him to rage against the republic are they who breathe anarchy and confiscation. Horrid rumours of ancient feudalisms have run round, and the quiet useful curé is seen to swell with sacerdotal pretensions, and to meditate strange revivals. All this has shocked and terrified the peasant, till at last he has come to think of Church and Throne with that kind of hate and fear with which the Scotch peasant under the Stuarts thought of episcopacy. He has awakened from his dream of the Red Spectre, which was his bugbear of old. If he is troubled now with spectres, it is with the tales of a Black Spectre of the dîmes, and the White Spectre of the corvées.

During the six months of war nearly a million of men held arms, and hardly a home in France but was

thus associated with the struggle. And every man knew that he was fighting for the republic. The republic was France; it alone was clear of the guilt of the original disasters; the only gleams of success had been won by the republic; the only captains who gained high reputations—the Faidherbes, the Chanzys, and the Denferts—were known or thought to be republicans. In the storm of disasters, in the agony of final surrender, and in the last humiliation of the cession, men's minds would turn to the image of their country,—and the symbol of their country was always the republic. Tremendous sufferings and defeat can bind men sometimes together as closely as illustrious victories, and sometimes even more closely.

To the old soldier of the empire it was a memory more sacred and binding to have been with the Emperor at Waterloo than to have been beside him at Austerlitz. The legend of the martyrdom of Waterloo bore its fruit in the second empire, and the men who condoned the crime of December were the sons and grandsons of the men who had been dragged to bleed in the death-struggle of the last years of the empire, who perished in Spain, Germany, or Belgium, who died on the march from Moscow or in the bloody fields of Champagne and the Marne. The legend of the great war of 1870 is slowly forming itself; and the name under which the battles of France were fought, and which symbolised her life, was the name of the republic. It is sometimes the vanquished cause which leaves deeper associations than the victorious. And, as in every cottage in France, since 1815, the tradition of the great events and great sufferings of the generation before grew personal and living round the lurid image of Napoleon, so the graven memories of 1870 and 1871 clung with a tragic pathos round the image and name of the republic.

There was thus a basis of sentiment to attach the peasant to the republic as an institution. But this would have availed little had it not been supported by solid inducements. This tendency was turned into a principle by the patience and skill of one man. To M. Gambetta is due at once the conception and the accomplishment of this grand political revolution. It is a feat to be ranked amongst the highest successes of political sagacity and genuine intuition. As a stroke of policy, it ought to place him amongst the two or three statesmen of genius of our time. And the patience and dexterity with which this policy was elaborated are as fine as the power of the conception. M. Gambetta saw that the progress of the social evolution was fatally interrupted by the antagonism between the peasant and the artisan, by the gulf which divided the one from the other in political spirit, and the antipathy of the peasant to the republic from which alone anything could come. He saw that the occasion had arrived when the peasant might come over to the republic, when the gulf between him and the workman might be bridged, and when both might be rallied round a common political ideal.

With this view he patiently set himself the task to present to the mass of rural France the republic as at once the national and the conservative symbol. For three years now he has laboured with a patience and an energy which would have aroused suspicion, had it been less unobtrusive, in order to allay the suspicions of the peasants, to show them the republic and the republican party as the real basis of order and of industry, to dispel the old association of republican with socialist. The noble orations which, whilst free speech was permitted, he addressed to France, were always addressed to the country at large, and especially the rural elements, and were as full of the true con-

servative temper as they were of national sentiment. They had that success which belongs only to the rare orators of an age who know how to infuse a new idea into an entire generation. Since free speech has been suppressed, his action has been still more unceasing in insisting on legality and order, in insisting on the republic as the principle of legality, and in throwing on the anti-republican parties the character of conspirators and revolutionists. Never speaking in the Chamber, he has laboured incessantly to prevent his party from speaking at all, and from committing act, word, or attitude of violence; until, alone of the sections of the Chamber, the Left of Gambetta is the party which has never menaced any interest, or attempted any cabal, or indulged in any passion,—which has been always loyal to every legal right, hostile to every change, and resolute against every plot.

Monarchists, Churchmen, Bourbonists, Orleanists, Imperialists, and Communists have been seen in a phantasmagoria of conspiracies, intrigues, and *coups d'état*. The republic and the Left, which is its guard, alone have represented to France and to the world respect for rights, regular government, and an era of rest. And if, of this republican party M. Thiers has been the titular head and the tongue, undoubtedly M. Gambetta is its genius and its will. Whilst Thiers came over to it by the effect of calculation, Gambetta created it by his conviction, energy, and self-command. And his reward is patent. For two years the factions of the Assembly have been growing more odious to the nation, whilst the republican majorities have become more certain and more complete. The republican party is no longer besieged in the great cities by armies of rural conservatives. They have sallied out into the country, and both have fraternised.

The rural districts are the true stronghold now of the republicans. The catholic West is as stout as the turbulent South or the industrial North; and the pastoral centres are at one. For the first time in this century the country voters have resisted the entire force of the Government engine—resisted it, and broken it silently to pieces. The extreme angle of Britanny, at once against its landlords, its priests, and its officials, returns a republican vote. The peasant has not changed his principles or his aims. He is still an arrant conservative, still bent on industrial repose, still the sworn foe of all disturbers of Government, from whatever side and with whatever end. He has not changed his principles, but he has distinctly changed his watchwords. And he finds now all that he hates and fears in the enemies of the republic. He has said to the kings, the rival kings, "It is thou and thy house that trouble Israel." And he is a republican because he is a conservative, and because he abhors revolution.

From all sides of France one may hear the republican leaders and managers, men who all their lives have looked to see the peasant vote undo in a day their labour in the cities for years, one may hear these men declare their wonder at the new creed of the peasant. "We cannot believe it now we see it, we cannot comprehend it, though we have worked for it," they say, as the peasants under their eyes vote for the republic in defiance of préfet, curé, and mayor. The canny, stubborn, suspicious, self-regarding peasant is the same man now that he always was, and he is voting for that which in his slow, sure way he has found out to be the path of peace, order, law and prosperity. In country towns and rural districts it is all the same; whether it be for members of the Assembly, mayors, or municipal council, the republican

candidate is chosen. There never was a sillier jest than that famous phrase of the "Republic without republicans." There are now some six or seven millions of republicans; not republicans by theory or conviction or taste, not democrats, not even reformers, but simply republicans in resisting a monarchic revolution, and in founding a system of law and rest. And this critical political conversion is mainly the work of one man.

There are few men who, in this country, have been more hastily judged than M. Gambetta. The Gambetta of reality, the man known to parties and voters in France, is as nearly as possible the antithesis of the Gambetta of the vulgar imagination. The idea that he is an impassioned rhetorician, a violent demagogue, and a man of phrases, is simply ludicrous to those who really know the secret of his influence, and his actual mode of working. That he was the one man who rose in France, and who roused France, during the war; the one man whom the Germans recognised, whom they still recognise, as a great force—that he is an orator, and capable of Titanic outbursts of energy, is no doubt true; but it is not the light in which he has been seen since the hour of the capitulation. This demagogue has for twelve months never addressed an audience; this man of phrases has for years hardly uttered a word in the Chamber; this violent democrat has never let slip a revolutionary suggestion. And all the while his influence has been extending, and his action growing more definite, and never more so than during the time when every republican channel has been shut.

Far different are the modes in which his power has been gained. By the most solid and lawful of all methods of gaining influence; by the personal ascendency of a strong nature and a clear brain, exerted

silently, daily, and unconsciously; by sagacious counsels, based on passionate convictions; by fortitude, reticence, self-control, patience, and sagacity; by dexterity in seizing any political opportunity; by capacity to accept the inevitable, and turn it to better uses; by the most difficult of all tasks for a political chief, that of rallying, disciplining, and creating a party whilst submitting to a succession of defeats without the hope of victory or the chance of retaliation—teaching them to endure an almost crushing repression without recourse to insurrection; these are the means by which Gambetta has succeeded in imposing his policy on the republican party, as in imposing the republican party upon France. It is a career so truly that of the leader of a national party, such as we understand it, that it is strange this has not been more fully recognised in England. With untiring energy and prudence he has directed the principal republican journal which has steadily reorganised the republican party, whilst never admitting a chance for prosecution even under a "state of siege." Its policy has been strictly conservative, whilst at the same time essentially republican. Its task has been daily to insist on legality, respect for established institutions, the renunciation of all violent panaceas, and the gradual formation of a regular government. In the Chamber the work of this stirring orator has been to suppress all speeches, to organise the party votes, to sustain the courage of the waverers after defeat, to repress every outburst of impatience. Those who go to the Assembly prepared to see the Left the aggressive party, have been struck by their patience and reticence under every attack, their resolve to avoid all discussion, their inflexible principle of recognising no constituent powers in the Chamber; and at the head of the party, intensely active but resolutely silent,

persuading, encouraging, calming all, but never mounting the tribune, the greatest popular orator of France.

It has been a task of peculiar difficulty, because, whilst reassuring the rural conservatives, M. Gambetta was risking the indignation of the city democrats. His most violent enemies are found in the Commune and the friends of the Commune. These fanatics, to whom metaphysical theories are of more importance than national results, have fallen upon him as the worst of all possible enemies—a traitor to democracy. The late rupture between M. Gambetta and the Paris radicals has been and still is a real danger to M. Gambetta. His grand policy of bringing the rural conservatives and the town democrats for once into line upon the ground of a conservative republic, may of course always fail if the city republicans are incapable of adopting a compromise. It is true that the compromise to which they were invited was one of those compromises in which one side appears to yield everything; for the Republic of the last twelve months has been as oppressive and anti-republican as the worst of the tyrannies which preceded it, and as arbitrary as any precarious government could be made to be. And if M. Gambetta and his party seemed to be more than accepting, almost supporting this system, as if for mere sake of its name, it was hard for the popular masses to believe that they got anything by the name. There are, however, two things in the Republic of Marshal MacMahon: in the first place the institution is the Republic, and in the next place the men are avowedly temporary. It was not, like the empire, a dynasty and a permanent despotism; it is not, like the monarchy, a principle and a class-tyranny. It was a temporary repression, grievous to bear, but worth bearing for the sake of all that it made possible.

If it has irritated democrats in France, it has puzzled constitutionalists in England, to see the entire party of the Left resolutely clinging to a Chamber which they branded as mere usurpation, accepting without protest its incendiary decisions, and ardently working at its combinations whilst denying its right to make a law. To their own friends they too often seemed to be men who were taking part with a cabal, which in set words declared itself at war with the nation, a cabal which the republican minority were utterly powerless to restrain. Their policy, however, was a perfectly intelligible one. The Assembly represented legality, and it also represented the republic; for if the Assembly was not the legal power of the nation, and if it had not accepted the republic, there was nothing legal but the empire, and the field was open to any successful adventure. And it was of the last importance that the plank of legality should be retained in the storm, and the republic appear before the nation as the sole legitimate power. Then the army would obey the Assembly and its chosen authorities, and to defy the Assembly was to open the era of *pronunciamentos*. Again, had the slightest pretext been given for repressive measures against the republican party, had a suspicion found a foothold that it was engaged in insurrectionary schemes, the rural conservatives would have instantly flung off from the republic as being no longer identified with order. The republicans, then, would have been the conspirators, the malcontents, as of old, and the legitimate holders of power would again have been saviours of society. This old, old game of the retrograde cause has been utterly checkmated by the patience, the self-control, and the farsightedness of the republican leaders.

Their parliamentary tactics have been simple in

design, though very trying in execution. Their plan has been to accept to the utmost the legal authority of the Chamber, to check its excesses by skilful tactics, whilst never appearing as a factious or insurgent element. A single violent protest would have called out all the revolutionary instincts, have called them out to no purpose, and to certain repression ; whilst a direct appeal to the nation would have broken the confidence of the conservative peasants. This is the secret of what some have called the tameness of Gambetta, and what the ardent democrats have attacked as open apostasy. In the language of one of them, the business of the party is *faire le mort*, to assume extinction whilst working with intense activity and watching for every opportunity. It is a policy needing first-rate organisation and mutual confidence, great ingenuity and energy, with the power of waiting for the chance. The grand aim was to bring about a dissolution, whilst never declaring war on the majority, or appealing to the people against them. Gradually it was believed that the play of parties would discredit and defeat each succeeding government, until the failure of every combination should bring about dissolution in very despair.

It is the fashion in England to make merry over the French Assembly, and the gross caricatures of its public sittings with which leading journals indulge the pharisaical vanity of English constitutionalists have misled many amongst us as to the real character of that Assembly. But, as all the world in France knows, the public sittings are merely the interludes of its real activity, and are often devoted, like those of other parliaments, to the noisiest jesters or most violent bores. The art of parliamentary manœuvring is not the noblest of modern inventions ; but, such as the art is, it is practised in France with consummate ability.

At any rate, the tactics which the Left have displayed in a situation of desperate emergency may be ranked with the best examples of discipline and sagacity in party organisation. The defeat of the Monarchic plot in November was a happy instance of what can be done by an indomitable minority. Even before Easter the De Broglie Government would have been defeated, and have disappeared, had not the plans of M. Gambetta been ruined by the unlucky blunder of M. Ledru-Rollin. The policy at last has succeeded, and at length the impossibility of the actual Assembly continuing to govern the country has been made manifest by the mere machinery of parliamentary strategy, without a single excuse for the charge that the Left have appealed to force, or have quitted the ground of strict legality.

The result of this policy has been to extend the republican sentiment in France as it could have been extended in no other way. By the universal consent of all parties, an honest appeal to the country at this moment would show an overwhelming republican majority. According to good authorities, a direct and honest appeal to the nation, on the three typical causes, would return republic, empire, and monarchy in proportions of six, two, and a half. According to some, Gambetta would be carried as deputy in four-fifths of all the departments of France. But if the country is essentially republican, it is at the same time truly conservative. The advanced democrats are in a scattered minority, and, since the collapse of the communal insurrection, a new democratic rising is impossible for many a year. Hence, whilst nothing but a republican settlement will ultimately satisfy the country, nothing but a moderate government can hope for permanent support. Fortunately, the men of the Left are clearly convinced of this ; they are aware of the necessity of patience, and see that their day has not yet come.

Perhaps it would be the most desirable solution if, after one or two intermediate steps, a strong republican government could be established on the type of men like M. Grévy. To the communards and the ultra-radicals no doubt M. Grévy represents nothing but the *bourgeois* reaction, and M. Gambetta himself is to them much of the same colour. But communards and ultra-radicals for the present are out of the field, and M. Gambetta himself is a long way from being understood as the practical statesman that he is.

All these and similar calculations would be worthless if there was ground for the current belief in the success of imperialist plots. Because military adventurers have so often succeeded in France and elsewhere, because Napoleon III. seized an empire amidst the wrangles of republicans, we are all apt to assume that the party have only to fix their day to proclaim Napoleon IV. It may be so, and he would be a bold man who felt certain that any given thing was impossible in the present aspect of France. But there seems little in the state of the country to justify these expectations. The imperialists are powerful, or rather conspicuous, by their audacity, skill, and cohesion, by the experience of twenty years of government and power, by the goodwill of large sections of the army, by the general tradition and prestige of that which has filled men's minds and accomplished great changes. For twenty years every adventurer of courage and ambition was a born imperialist; every successful capitalist, soldier, or official was in some sort pledged to the only party which offered him a career, and for which he could feel a fellow-feeling. The second empire was a sort of grand Crédit Mobilier or joint-stock company (unlimited) for military, financial, or professional speculators. The men who meant to win, and who knew how to win, were all entered as members of this

great national Jockey Club. And naturally, though the company itself has been wound up, its old frequenters are the men who make a great noise in the world, and fill it with rumours of a new revival of the concern.

This is perhaps the reason why the French Rentes are an inverse and not a direct barometer of public affairs in France. The witty Dean said there was no such fool as the Three per Cents. The Three per Cents may be very shortsighted, though in England they bear some relation to prospects of national prosperity. But the French Three per Cents are not only foolish and shortsighted, but they give way to political passion. A vision of successful conspiracy sends them up; the probability of civil war makes them buoyant; and the prospect of a really settled government will send the quotations down to "heavy" or "flat." The farther off grows the chance of the country being turned into a national "hell," the more depressed grows the rentier world. And as the French nation in general do not do much in Rentes, their rise or fall will depend on the prospect which the speculator class may entertain of a legal exploitation of society. A party like this is naturally strong, and it would be strange indeed if we did not hear a great deal of its activity. But it lacks two things now which enabled it formerly to seize power and found an empire. The imperial tradition was strong with the peasants, and it was paramount with the army. It was the only thing with an imposing past and with a possible future. Both these are lost to it now. The tradition of the empire is shattered for ever in the homes of the peasantry. The Church has laboured to uproot it, and laboured we may hope for the Republic, not for itself. And what of that tradition the Church failed to uproot was uprooted by successive mayors and préfets of Gambetta, Thiers, and De Broglie.

We may take it as admitted that whilst the empire is strong amongst successful bourgeois and large sections of the rich, it has died out for ever from the rural districts of France. As to the army, we are assured on all sides that it is only partly imperialist, and that, by the best accounts, to an extent not exceeding a third. On the other hand, a section in the lower ranks, hardly inferior in number, is just as distinctly republican ; whilst the bulk may be taken as unwilling to be the tools of any political party. The *esprit de corps* of the old Imperial Guard is no longer available ; the sense of power as of a prætorian band is gone ; and the army itself is far more likely to fall to pieces than to impose a new dynasty on the country. These are not hopeful elements for the imperial restoration ; and though perhaps in the chaos of parties it is not altogether impossible, it would need a conjunction of chances, and a genius for conspiracy, such as are not at all likely to be vouchsafed to the prayers of the Corsican band. If they were going to succeed in their *coup d'état* or *pronunciamento*, why has it not come off already—for assuredly as good opportunities have arisen as are ever likely to arise ? And if it were to succeed, and the flaccid lad at Chiselhurst came back in the purple and the bees, how long would his reign be likely to endure ? The empire is by its essence an autocracy—a democratic autocracy, it may be, but in any case a government ultimately resting in a single hand. That is its strength and its claim. If it were anything else, it would not differ from any of the other parties of moral disorder which, since the fall of M. Thiers, have been struggling to possess themselves of France. But where is the strong man of the third empire, and how would any of his viziers or marshals differ from the rest of the generals who conspire and vapour at Versailles ?

There is, however, another danger to which France is exposed, perhaps more real than socialist insurrections or imperial plots. In the condition in which France lies, she is practically at the mercy of her late enemy. As every one but the English ministry saw, the so-called peace of Frankfort left France utterly exposed to a second overthrow at the will of Germany. In a military sense three weeks would suffice to bring the German Emperor to the gates of Paris, and no one seems to see anything to stop him. The military caste throughout Germany long to finish their work; the military and official caste are scandalised that France should presume to live; that she should be still wealthy is a clear *casus belli*. Prince Bismarck is said to speak of the five milliards with the self-reproach of a bandit chief who discovers that a captive whom he has just ransomed could have found double the sum, had he been wrung rather more sharply. It is certain that renewal of the war has been more than once contemplated in Germany, and is still looked on as merely adjourned. The safety of France therefore rests only on the good sense of the German people, and their power to resist the criminal ambition of the German chiefs. No one in France or out of it can seriously believe that the French army is in any way equal to meet the German army in the field. The re-organisation of the army has been much talked about, but all accounts concur in showing that it has not gone beyond that stage. Catastrophes like that of 1870 are not repaired in a moment, and every authority agrees in the opinion that the army is still under the influence of that complete overthrow.[1]

There is not the slightest ground for the assertion

[1] This great danger, as we now know, was imminent in 1875, and was only averted by the secret influence of the sovereigns of England, of Russia, and European diplomacy.

so sedulously repeated by official organs in Berlin, that France is preparing to renew the contest. Neither in nor out of the army is there any dream of the kind. Frenchmen indeed would be wanting in every sense of patriotism did they accept the partition of their country as final, and took the treaty of Frankfort as the date of a new national era. But as it is impossible that it could be otherwise, it is hypocrisy to pretend that because Frenchmen do not admit what it would be base in them to admit, they are therefore preparing for war. There is all the difference between declining to believe the finality of an act of conquest and the active intention to dispute it as a fact. Nations are often compelled to recognise as facts what they would be craven to sanction as rights. For a generation after Waterloo, the French people talked of revenge more loudly and more unanimously than they have ever done towards Germany before Sedan or since.

If our statesmen in 1815-1825 had acted on the assumption that these inevitable protests were equivalent to a national intention to renew the war, they would have acted in bad faith and with wanton aggression. Since no conceivable acts of spoliation, which German hypocrisy calls guarantees, could have forced the French people to acknowledge them as based on incontestable right, unless the French people had lost all sentiment of honour along with the loss of the provinces, it is ill faith to see the renewal of war in every groan for the cities and the citizens which have been torn from them. If the annexation of half of all France had been found necessary to the strategic combinations of Von Moltke, it would have been the duty of the other half to refuse to acknowledge it as a right, however much they were forced to accept it as a fact.

The question then is solely one of fact, and the

patent fact is that France is not contemplating war, in any sense that belongs to political realities, in any sense in which it is not just as true to say that Germany is contemplating war with Russia, or Russia with Germany. Every nation which maintains an army assumes that war is not impossible, and every nation which has been dismembered hopes the day may come when its lost member may return. In this sense, and in this sense only, is France contemplating revenge ; and in this sense Denmark may be said to be contemplating war on Germany, or Turkey on Greece, or Spain on England. There is not a single party, not a single journal, in France which hints at a renewal of the war. Responsible men of all sections, and indeed the people at large, are far too conscious of their own prostration, and of the utter madness of the attempt, to make such a policy endurable. Of all parties the republican party, if any, is pledged to the national honour ; and of all men in it, Gambetta represents most distinctly the principle of no surrender. But the republican party and its chief stand pledged to a policy of peace. And though a political party may not always disclose their real intentions, a party would be instantly discredited which publicly discountenanced a national desire.

According to a popular theory, a theory most grateful to German arrogance and British morality, the entire French nation is in a state of physical, moral, and national decrepitude. There are always wiseacres who derive solid satisfaction from shaking their heads over Sodom and Gomorrah, and explaining the mysteries of national corruption. Curiously enough it is a practice in which all nations indulge in turn, and with the smallest possible data. A generation ago it was the fashion to groan over the decadence of England, the vitals of which, we were told, were eaten

up with pauperism, gin, and the Haymarket. At another time Germany was understood to be reduced to a state of universal syncope by addiction to metaphysics and nicotine. At another time Russia is supposed to be the victim of general gangrene, and a great moralist has warned us that nothing can come out of Italy but dancers and singers. These wholesale indictments against nations are equally easy and equally absurd. When thirty-six millions of men in the very centre of Europe are found in a state of real decay, the knell will have struck for the civilisation of Europe. Europe is a political unit, and its civilisation is homogeneous, and if one-fifth of its area is in a dying state, Europe has not long to live. The brain or the heart of a living body might as well dilate with a gloomy satisfaction about the signs of cancer impending over the misguided stomach, as Englishmen or Germans moralise over the signs of dissolution in France. Just as it is the conviction of profound provincials that our modern Babylon is a mystery of abomination, so it is the faith of profound politicians that some particular race in Europe is rotting towards its end; so, too, it is the inward belief of the superior American that the old world is used up, and so the apostles of a new life in Salt Lake will assure us that the old American States are doomed. Of all satire national satire is the most obvious, as it is certainly the most monotonous.

That society in France is in active convulsion and transition, that her national cohesion is suffering most violent shocks, that classes and strata of her society are on the point of final extinction, all this is too obvious to be discussed. But the state of exhaustion and corruption within her is not nearly so great as that which some other nations have experienced, and which more than once she has experienced herself. This

does not to-day approach the state of disorganisation and apparent death in which Germany lay in the Thirty Years' War, or in which Prussia lay on the morrow of Jena; nor does it approach that which France herself has known in the mediæval civil wars, or in the declining years of Louis XIV. A superficial moralist, who dilated on the state of England during the reign of Charles II., would have found little to remind him that she had just produced Cromwell and Shakespeare, and was about to produce Newton and Marlborough. The elasticity of France in recovering from the havoc of the war, and in unfolding incredible resources, has filled the world with wonder, and has filled Prince Bismarck's soul with pangs of covetous remorse. In very truth France, for generations, has never been so laborious, so thrifty, so prosperous, so ingenious, so rich, so active as she is at this moment. Amidst black spots marked with unutterable corruption, and perhaps with physical decline, the millions who cultivate her vast and prolific area are as hardy, alert, and sober as ever they were known to us before. Absinthe, Ernest Feydeau, cafés chantants, and baccarat are not much in vogue amongst them; and if these reach as much as a million, there are thirty-five millions to whom they are unknown. A people so intelligent and vigorous have raised France before out of deeper disasters, and with far less available resources.

It may well be that worse is in store for her yet, and that the lowest point of her agony has not even now been reached. It may well be that a generation or generations may still be needed for the final settlement of France. The task which she has set herself to solve is one which demands generations, and in which even greater catastrophes may seem insignificant. The passage from an exhausted to a new type of

society is invariably surrounded with convulsion and disaster. And if out of the ebb and flow of the revolutionary struggle we are destined to see grow up in France a permanent and solid republic, victorious over the opposing forces, whether feudal, military, or Catholic, the memory of the struggles through which it had been won would be speedily effaced, and the price at which it was secured would be cheerfully and easily accepted.

IV

LÉON GAMBETTA

(1882)

This was a memorial address on the death of Gambetta, December 31, 1882, and was delivered in Newton Hall shortly after the State funeral, January 6, 1883. It was published in the Contemporary Review *(vol. xliii.). It is in form what the French call an* Eloge, *and it must be read as the funeral discourse given at a public ceremony by one who was deeply absorbed in the crisis of the Republic, and who had long been in personal relations with the dead Statesman, his friends, and colleagues. A long journey round the French Provinces in the autumn of 1877, during the great Electoral campaign, to decide if Marshal MacMahon should* se soumettre *or* se démettre, *when the writer sent a series of letters to the* Times, *and had been in touch with all the Republican committees centralised by Gambetta, had given him a special insight into the efforts which forced the Marshal to resign in December 1877 (1908).*

For good or for evil, Léon Gambetta was bound up with the Republic as was no other contemporary life. He was the first statesman of European importance formally to offer his public homage to Comte as the greatest mind of the nineteenth century; and formally to adopt, as his leading idea in politics, Comte's great

aphorism: "Progress can only arise out of the development of Order." But it is not for this that Gambetta holds a place of prime importance in my eyes. The doings of a statesman are what concern us, and not his protestations. And it is in the region of action that Gambetta foreshadows the type of the Republican statesman—rudely and incompletely, no doubt—but with all the essential elements. He is the first European statesman of this century who is heart and soul Republican; the only one whose fibre is entirely popular; who saw that the Republic implied a real social reconstruction; he is the only European statesman who is equally zealous for progress and for order, and most assuredly he is the only statesman of this century who has formally thrown away every kind of theological crutch.

This is no panegyric of a public man. Of such we have had enough. It is no critical analysis of a striking personality. We are met here neither to bury Cæsar, nor to praise him. Brutus and Cassius and the rest have told us that he was ambitious, and had many grievous faults. I am not about to dispute it. There are many things in his public career, especially in its later years, which we wholly fail to reconcile, not only with the best type of the statesman, but with any reasonable version of his own principles. As to his private life, there are things, perhaps, gross and unworthy, and a public man has no private life. But unworthy if they be, they were not of the kind which seriously disable a public career. He was not a corrupting pedantocrat like Guizot, nor a corrupted cynic like Thiers; he was not a king of gamblers like Napoleon, nor a king of jobbers like Louis Philippe. He was a jovial, unabashed son of Paris; without special refinement of life, or sensitive delicacy of conscience. We have yet

no means of proving the truth of the stories that we hear of the kind of men who from time to time shared his intimacy, and of the enterprises or adventures to which he allowed himself to be made a more or less blinded accomplice. Let us leave these tales for time to reveal. However they turn out, the essential man in the main is known to us now.

If he allowed himself familiarity with unworthy adventurers, certain it is, that in all parts of France he retained till his death the devoted attachment of the most honourable spirits of his country. If his name was used at times to back up a financial job, it is yet most clear that with portentous opportunities for serving himself, he neither made nor spent a fortune. If his policy was not always consistent with a high sense of honour, it was never dictated by vulgar ambition. Coarseness of nature, whether in private or in public life, is no final bar to greatness in a statesman. The greatest names in political history have often been soiled with unedifying weakness and unscrupulous expedients. The statesmen of history are as little the types of moral purity as the saints are types of practical sagacity. A statesman in an era like this is a man by necessity of compromise and expedients. His agents he takes as he finds them; and he takes them with good and bad together. And when all this is said, we must judge them in the rough as they are. Energy and sagacity, and the genius to give the true lead to forty millions of men, are qualities of such transcendent value to mankind, that we must hail them at all costs wherever we find them. And these qualities were assuredly in Léon Gambetta.

I will take but four cardinal facts about his career, and consider him, firstly, as the true creator of the Republic; secondly, as a type of the statesman of the

people; thirdly, as the representative of the union of order and progress; and fourthly, as representative of the secular movement in politics.

In every one of these, and in all of them in combination, Gambetta is the only French statesman of the first order whom this century has produced.

Of the first order? it is asked. Yes! Whatever judgment we may pass on his work, there can be no real dispute about his power. He was hardly laid in his grave, when the very existence of the Republic was suddenly challenged, and through all ranks of Republicans a sudden panic arose, men's hearts failing them for fear. A week before his death, in spite of disquiet and confusion, the Constitution in France seemed as much a thing of course as the Constitution in England. A week after his burial everything seemed an open question again, as on the eve of Sedan. He is the one Frenchman whom the keen statesmen of Germany took to be of paramount importance to Germany; he is the one Frenchman who represented something definite to every man throughout the civilised world possessing the simplest notion of politics; and he was the one Frenchman whose name and character were known to every elector in France. The death of Gambetta was to France what the death of Cavour was to Italy; what the death of Bismarck will be to Germany. At the day of his death he filled the minds of French politicians more than Guizot ever did, or Thiers, or any of the nameless Ministers of empire and monarchy—more than Peel ever filled men's thoughts amongst us, more even than Gladstone does now.

His brief hour of office was an interlude. He is almost the one Frenchman of our times who could fall from office without disappearing from public life. Office made no difference to his personal power,

except that it hampered it by arousing a storm of jealousies. Death, as usual, is the true measure of greatness, and death has revealed to us with startling force what is the Republic with Gambetta and what it is without him. Right or wrong, this is power; this is one of those pre-eminent personalities which occur but now and then in a century. Here is the great man (it is one of those facts which we must take as facts, whether we like it or not), and it is with justice that his followers say, "Here is the man who is not of the order of the Jules Favres and the Jules Simons, or the Jules Ferrys, or even of the Thiers and the Guizots—here is a born leader of the order of the Dantons and the Hoches."

I. Take him as the creator of the Republic. There were three successive epochs in which Gambetta was the true author of the Republic: in 1868-9, in 1870-1, in 1876-8. For sixteen years the Empire had lain like a nightmare upon France; corrupting it from above, crushing it within, weakening it without, degrading and stifling the entire French nation. All the better elements of the people revolted; all were ready for a resurrection—but who gave the word? Always and everywhere Gambetta. His energy, his courage, his faith in the Republic, his scorn of the Empire, rang like an electric shock through France. In November 1868, the date of his famous speech denouncing the Empire, he was a briefless, unknown barrister. In the early spring of 1869 he was the rival, the terror, and the judge of the Empire. The Emperor in these last two years shook and cowered before a young lawyer.

It is easy to say that hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen felt this, that Paris was seething with insurrection, and the whole thinking class, and the entire working class, was in defiance. True; but

both wanted the tongue, the soul, the heart, and they found those in Gambetta. The Jules Simons, the Rocheforts, and Prévost Paradols, might write smart articles; Delescluze and Blanqui could conspire; but neither epigrams nor conspiracies could shake the Empire. It needed an agitator who was also a statesman. Gambetta was both; and he struck the Empire as neither fifty Jules Simons nor a hundred Blanquis could strike it.

The Empire ended, as we know, in an utter wreck; and again, on the morrow of Sedan, the Republic was the work of Gambetta. He planned it, he organised it, he established it. In that shameful overthrow of France, in the winter of 1870, the one redeeming effort stood out clear; and again, one man alone struck the imagination of Europe, of Germany, of France. Such a negation of all that is sound and manly as was the Empire, cannot afflict a people for a generation without leaving a heritage of blight and corruption; and with all my love for the French name and people, I cannot deny that in 1870 it had sunk as low as a nation can sink without death. From that torpor France was saved by the energy of Gambetta. That one man, a young, unknown, penniless lawyer of thirty-two, roused France from her slumber, upheld her banner against hopeless odds, made the French people feel again they were a people, and planted in their hearts the image of Republic instead of Empire.

Then it was that the Republic was formed: Gambetta's name was made a household word in France. Into every village, from Ushant to Nice, from Dunkirk to St. Sebastian, the conscript of 1870 carried back the tale of a leader who had kept alive the French name. Since the days of the First Napoleon, no name had ever penetrated into every

heart in France as did Gambetta's. He was the one man known to all living Frenchmen—man, woman, and child—and known as the inspirer of a new sense —love of the country. He was the moral inspirer of the nation; for he recalled the spirit of the men who fought at Valmy and Jemappes; nay, it is no profanation to say it, he recalled Jeanne Darc herself. He restored the French nation to itself, giving France back to Europe as one of her great forces. This is the imperishable work of the Republic of 1870; and for this the Republic of 1870 will be remembered when Bismarck and Moltke and the German Empire are names for historical research.

It failed. Yes! it failed, because the miserable monarchies and empires, which have succeeded each other in France since the Revolution, had crushed out of Frenchmen the national spirit; and no energy or genius can make a nation in an hour. But I say it advisedly—now that twelve years have passed, and all the facts are known—that but for the intrigues and fears of men like Bazaine, and Trochu, and Thiers, and the wild intestine hatred that a generation of civil war had bred, and the feebleness and the selfishness that a generation of Empire had bred, the defence would have succeeded.

The Germans knew it, and feared it. It was impossible for Germany to conquer France had Frenchmen been true to themselves. The grandsons of the men who had repelled Europe at five sides at once were conquered by a nation no bigger, and far less powerful in material resources than themselves. I can never forget how Gambetta himself spoke of this to me. In a long conversation on the war, I asked him years after all was over: "Could then the defence have been continued in 1871?" "Certainly!" he groaned out bitterly, crunching his clasped hands.

"Of course it could!" "Then why did they give in?" said I. "C'était le cœur qui leur manquait," he roared out, bounding off his seat, and his face purple with shame and rage. "Because they were out of heart," said he. And I felt what Danton had been in '93.

It is said this is not very much to have done. Gambetta was an eloquent talker, and did nothing but put into eloquent words the thoughts of thousands. In one sense that is true. The statesman *ex hypothesi* is not the original thinker; he is never the lonely discoverer of a peculiar truth. Nor is he the mere mouthpiece of other men's schemes. The man who touches the brains and hearts of his time with that sympathetic and guiding note which brings them to one act at the given time—the man who makes the current idea and the dominant feeling burn in thirty millions of spirits at once, who utters the true word at the right time—this is the statesman; and the man of this sort is rare, and appears but once in a generation or two.

The work of Gambetta in 1868, or in 1870, was in the main the work of a single idea. His work in 1877 was far more complex, and far more truly of the political sort. The great struggle in 1877 between Despotism and Republic—for that was the true issue then, as we now see—was in a marvellous sense the work of Gambetta. The long six months' struggle of France with the Government of Combat, under MacMahon and De Broglie, the consummate skill with which all the Republican parties were restrained, sustained, and concentrated, the order, self-restraint, and discipline of the country under a series of reckless provocations, the grasp over an intricate network of electoral movements from one end of France to another, the marvellous success in face of desperate

pressure, the ease, order, and completeness of the triumph, its liberal and noble spirit, and the rejection of all vindictive retaliation—this was the work of Gambetta alone. I was myself at that time in all parts of France, and I was in constant intercourse with leaders of the movement in Paris and in the country. One and all would say, "We do not know the data ourselves, but Gambetta has the whole machinery of the party in his hands. He knows the facts in every constituency in France. He has them all in his head; he assures us of success; and *we trust* him." France *did* trust him in 1877; and the Republic was made.

Thus three times the Republic was due to Gambetta: to his audacity in 1868, to his resolution in 1870, to his sagacity in 1877. And to be the foremost bold man, the foremost resolute man, the foremost sagacious man of your generation, is to be the great man. To be the great man who founds the Republic is to be the man of the century. I take of this century in Europe, Canning, Peel, Cobden, Gladstone, in England; Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldi, in Italy; Stein and Bismarck, in Germany; Deak and Kossuth, in Hungary; Lincoln, Grant, and Garfield, in America; and I say that the foundation of the Republic in France is a work far greater and more difficult than any which they undertook.

The Republic in France is the condition of all progress. The old Europe of feudalism cannot disappear, the new Europe of the people cannot begin, till the Republic is founded. It means the definite extinction of hereditary claims of every kind, the final admission of capacity and merit to every function in the State. The Republic is the issue of all modern history since the sixteenth century; it is the condition of all future progress since the eighteenth century

ended. It is the great political problem of modern Europe; ripe for solution only in France: already attained in a modified form by England; still hovering in the balance elsewhere. But the problem of the nineteenth century is the establishment of the Republic in France; and the man who as yet has done most to establish it is assuredly Léon Gambetta.

II. I take him next as the statesman of the new social strata; and here again it is certain that no single politician in Europe within this century has been at once a foremost power in Europe, and a man of the people in origin, habit, interest, and sympathy. The type of Lincoln and Garfield is common enough in the United States. But in Europe, in this century, there has been no other example. Men like Cavour and Bismarck are great forces; but they belong by race and training to the old feudal classes. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli did not belong to them by birth; but their training and their habits were as much those of the governing classes as Lord Derby's or Lord Salisbury's. Mr. Gladstone has the popular fibre and the popular sympathy; but he has never abandoned nor defied the old aristocratic orders. I do not say it would be wise for an English politician to do so; but in France it is the condition of true Republican force. Neither Thiers, nor Grévy, nor any of the elder statesmen have ever stood forth as direct representatives of the people. Gambetta alone, of the men of European position, has done so. His memorable words, that the Government of France must pass to new social strata, was no idle phrase.

Gambetta, even if for a moment he indulged in luxury, lived, and died, and was buried the son of the grocer of Cahors. He not only felt sympathy with the populace, but he never could cease to be of the populace himself. I have seen him within recent

years myself living like any young beginner in literature or science, as completely a son of the people as when he talked and laughed in the Café Procope. I am far from saying that this is necessary or even desirable in every country in Europe; but in France it is. The only possible Republican ruler in France is the man of the people. And it is of prime importance to Europe to show that the son of a country shopman can reach the first place in his country before he is forty, and without ceasing to be the son of the shopman. And here again I say that it is a thing of great moment in the world that the death of the son of a provincial tradesman should be an event of European importance, and that he should have the burial of a chief of the State.

III. I take him next as the first modern Frenchman who combined Revolutionary ends with Conservative methods—that is to say, who was resolved to carry out the principles of the Revolution, both those of 1789, 1791, and 1848, by means of popular conviction, and not by *coups-de-main* and terror. He was, as no other Frenchman in this century has been, trusted at once by the masses of the cities, and by the masses of the peasants. The workmen of the great cities of France are at present in a state of revolutionary excitement; the peasants and farmers of the country are the most purely Conservative class in Europe. I mean by Conservative, averse to all doubtful experiments, whether backwards or forwards. It is quite true that Gambetta was so Conservative that he had lost a large part of his influence with the workmen of Paris and Lyons. He would probably, had he lived, have lost even more. But he died, by free vote, Member for Belleville, the most insurgent quarter of Paris. He who did this at the same time possessed the confidence of the mass of the rural voters. This

was to unite Order and Progress, as no other foremost politician of France has ever done in our time. They have to choose the one or the other—the changes desired by the mass of the workmen, or the permanence loved by the mass of the peasants. They are avowed Revolutionists or avowed Conservatives; men who, like Thiers and Grévy, influence the middle class without influencing workmen at all; or men like Clémenceau, who lead the workmen, but not the rich and the peasantry. Gambetta was the one Frenchman of modern times who could induce the Revolutionists to follow constitutional means to their ends, whilst inducing the Conservatives to face and accept a new order of government. He had founded, and, had he lived, he would possibly have secured, what M. Lafitte has called an organic, progressive, Republican party.

He had hardly succeeded, when cut short in death. Nor can we be at all sure that in any case he would have succeeded in his task. The situation of France is extraordinarily difficult; one that makes government for the moment almost impossible. The democratic mania (and by that I mean the passion of groups and of individuals to reject every centre of power but that which promotes their own particular nostrums), this democratic frenzy has gone so far that we may well doubt if any government by opinion is now possible. Free government means government by consent of the governed and by rational guidance of their convictions. But when a society has got into that state that the majority of energetic natures hold it as the first duty of a man not to be governed at all; when opinion is in that state that in place of rational convictions society is saturated with prejudices incompatible with each other, and agreeing only in being impervious to reason at all—then government (by

conviction at least) is nearly a hopeless task. I am not saying that France has reached this hopeless state; but the democratic poison has gone nearly as far as is compatible with rational existence.

We, to whom the Republic is the normal condition of the most advanced civilisation, who call for a social and not a mere plutocratic Republic, are as far as ever from the democratic system. Let us explain these terms which are used so loosely in England. By Republican Government we mean that government which represents the mass of the people without privileged families of any kind, or any governing class, or any hereditary office. It is government in the name of the people, in the interests of all equally, in sympathy with the people; where, so far as the State is concerned, neither birth, nor wealth, nor class, give any prerogative whatever. We mean, in fact, by Republican what is on the lips of all English Liberals, but is so little to be found in the facts of English politics. By Democracy we mean the direct control of the machinery of government by all citizens equally, or rather, by such of them as can succeed in making themselves heard, and for the time paralysing the rest. This government by everybody in turn is the negation of the true Republican Government; for in place of being the government by conviction and consent of the people in the interest of all, it is the arbitrary enforcement of a set of narrow interests by small groups in endless succession.

The virus of democracy (which, in the sense in which I use it, is so little republican or popular government, that it is rather a series of impotent tyrannies by petty groups), the virus of democracy may have gone so far in France, that Gambetta would have attempted to organise it in vain. Certain it is, that with all his democratic training, and all his

democratic habits, his very existence was an antidote to democracy. Every great personality, every national reputation, every creative political force, is in itself the negation of democracy. Democracy, or everybody ruling for his day in turn, and in the meantime, till his turn comes, furiously assailing every one whose turn is come, is hushed into silence by the very existence of a great man. A great statesman is *ipso facto* as fatal to democracy as a great general is incompatible with mutiny. I am not speaking of England nor of the English Parliament, where different circumstances make different conditions. I am speaking of France to-day, and I do not hesitate to say that her one chance of good government lies in the hope that her government will assume a personal and not a democratic form. By personal I do not mean despotic; certainly not military, nothing imperial, not a rule of bayonets, and prisons, and exile, and the state of siege; but the government of a capable man or men, freely accepted and followed by the will of an intelligent people. In a way we have something of the kind here; in a way they have something of the kind in America. The great chance of their having it in France lay in the future of Gambetta. I am far from saying that in such a situation even he would have succeeded; but his life offered chances of such a thing that we look for in vain in France.

Far be it from me to imply that we should approve of all his schemes, or even condone his later policy. I am free to acknowledge that of late I have earnestly repudiated many leading features of his policy. His attack upon the Catholic fraternities, his idea of a State Church, of a State education, of State public works, are contrary, I hold it, to any just and radical principles; whilst the miserable aggression in Tunis, and the criminal spoliation of Egypt, fill us with the

warmest indignation. For the most part, in the last two years, I have found myself more often on the side of Clémenceau, and heartily desirous of seeing the policy of Clémenceau succeed.

But in the one great necessity of France, the formation of a governing party or power, perfectly Republican, at once progressive and Conservative, I ask myself if Clémenceau has the prospect of succeeding where Gambetta failed. By all means let us support him if prospect there be. But I am not sanguine. Clémenceau is so far unable to deal with Democracy, in that he is himself a fanatical adherent of the Democratic creed. To him the defeating of any personal power is the first duty of a citizen; whereas the formation of a personal power is the first necessity of the Republic. To him Opportunism is the worst of political crimes; whereas Opportunism is simply the basis of all true statesmanship. To him, the beginning and end of politics is the logical fulfilment of the Revolution; whereas the condition of fulfilling the Revolution is to make it the gradual development of Order. On all these grounds, although on so many a recent question I hold Clémenceau right and Gambetta wrong, we would have held to the party of Gambetta and not to that of Clémenceau. If we must choose between the Irreconcilables and the Opportunists, then Opportunism means practical government, and Irreconcilability means a pedantic doctrine. To have thrown over Gambetta for Clémenceau is the very type of the democratic frenzy.[1]

The one hope for France is the rise of a great

[1] How different a man is the Clémenceau of 1908 from the Clémenceau of 1883. Twenty-five years of struggles and defeats, Dreyfus, and sixty-seven years of life have turned the Opposition orator into the successful statesman (1908).

Republican chief. And circumstances had so worked that for the moment Gambetta was the only possible Republican chief. Power in France rests in the hands of some seven or eight millions of electors ; and these seven or eight millions know it, and mean to keep the power. Since the death of Louis Napoleon and Thiers, Gambetta's name was the one name of living Frenchmen which was known to every one of these millions. Grévy's is unknown to one-third of them, perhaps ; the name of Clémenceau is yet unknown to two-thirds of them. The extraordinary events of 1870 had carried the name and the fame of Gambetta into every cottage and garret in France. Nothing that Clémenceau, or Grévy, or Jules Simon, or Rochefort, or any one of these could do, could bring their names or their characters before the mass of the electors. The good sense of Grévy, the political logic of Clémenceau, are admirable forces ; but they cannot reach the men who hold the power. They cannot speak in the tones which are heard through France ; they cannot rouse the ideas of the distant sluggish millions. Grévy may issue a hundred messages, and Clémenceau may deliver a hundred speeches, but not one word of these will reach the dull ear of the herdsmen in the Morbihan, and the vine-dressers of the Gironde, and the woodcutters of the Jura, and the ploughmen of the Beauce.

But when Gambetta spoke, France heard it and knew it, from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. The stout farmers and the shepherds and the peasants, from the Pas de Calais to the Pyrenees, and the workmen of Belleville, and of Perrache, and of the Cannebière, of Lille, and Bordeaux, and Rouen, and Hâvre —every Frenchman knew it and understood it, and, more or less, was moved or influenced by it. France is politically a bilingual nation. One-half speaks a

political language, and lives in a political world, which is wholly unknown to the other. They who address one-half of the nation are incomprehensible to the other. Gambetta alone of modern Frenchmen was bilingual too. He found a language that both understood, and he alone could address France. He combined Order and Progress—that is, Revolutionary ends and a Conservative spirit. Here, then, was the political force. France is a Democratic Republic, whose only possible government is a popular chief, Revolutionary by his genius and Conservative by his instincts. Such an one was Gambetta, and for my part I see no other.

IV. I pass to the last of the points which remain to notice, and my words on this great man, or this great torso of a great man, are ended. He is the one European statesman of this century who systematically and formally repudiated any kind of acceptance of Priesthood. His Opportunist theory of a State Church was no doubt as wrong in principle as his persecution of the Catholic Orders. But about his formal rejection of all theology there can be no doubt; his life, his death, his burial, all alike bear witness to it. It is common enough with minor politicians of all types in France. But when we see the way in which the responsible rulers of France have entered into partnership with the priests, when we remember all that in that line was done by the Bourbons, Napoleons, and Orleans, by men like Guizot and Thiers, MacMahon and De Broglie, we see here a new thing—a statesman of the first rank in Europe who formally repudiates creeds in any shape, the first ruler of France in this century who has chosen to rule on purely human sanctions. Had his rejection of theology been simply negative, had he been a mere sceptic like Thiers, or an empty scoffer like Rochefort, it

is little that we should find to honour and respect in his secular belief. But the soul of Gambetta was not the soul of scoffer or sceptic. He had a religion in his soul, though he had neither God nor saint, though he never bowed the knee in the temple of Rimmon. His religion was France, an imperfect and but narrow image indeed of Humanity, but a part of Humanity and an organ and an emblem of it. His religious life, like his political life, remained but a fragment and a hope. Both have closed at the age of forty-four. What a future might have lain beyond had he lived to the age of Thiers or Guizot!

It is a thing which the world will remember one day — that vast ceremony in Paris on the 6th of January last—such a funeral as no emperor ever had, a day that recalled the gathering of the dawn of the Revolution in 1789; when all France helped to bury the one Frenchman who stood before Europe as Bismarck and Gladstone alone of living men stand before Europe to-day, and from first to last in that throng where Paris did honour to the son of the dealer of Cahors, no Catholic emblem or priest was seen; not a thought but for the great human loss and human sorrow, not a word but of human and earthly hopes. For the first time in this century Europe looked on and saw one of its foremost men laid in his rest by a nation in grief without priest or church, prayer or hymn.

The nation laid him in his rest with an honour that no service could equal. For death is peculiarly the sphere of the power and resources of the religion of the future. It will find for the last offices of its great sons noble words and affecting ceremonies, before which the conventional requiems will sound hollow. It will clothe the memory of the great man with all the memories of the servants of Humanity,

whose work he has helped, and whose great company he has joined at last. And in the spirit of the immortal traditions of patriotic defence, let us remember with honour the great citizen who has been borne to the premature grave, wherein were laid the unrevealed future of Danton, and Hoche, and Condorcet.

V

THE MAKING OF ITALY

(1860)

The three following studies on the Italian kingdom and its makers, Cavour and Garibaldi, were the result of visits to Italy and intercourse with the leaders of the Nationalist cause. At Oxford I had been the friend and pupil of Count Aurelio Saffi, one of the Triumvirs at Rome with Mazzini and Armellini during the defence of the Republic in 1849 under Garibaldi. By Saffi I was introduced to Mazzini, Campanella, Pianciani, and other Italian exiles, and I travelled in Italy with introductions in 1853 and 1855. When the Italian cause was taken up by Napoleon III. early in 1859, I took deep interest in the question, and wrote letters thereon in the Daily News. *This brought me into relation with Francis Newman, Count Pulszki, the friend of Kossuth, G. J. Holyoake, Count Pepoli, and other* Italianissimi. *Meetings took place in my chambers in Lincoln's Inn, and we projected the formation of an Italian Association to promote the cause by appealing to English sympathy in the press and by public meetings and the Trades Unions and radical organisations.*

This project was suddenly cut short by Napoleon's abandonment of the campaign by the Peace of Villafranca (July 1859). In August I started off to Italy with ample introductions, and I undertook to write letters to the Morning Post *and to the* Daily News *as independent and honorary*

correspondent. At Turin I made the acquaintance of Senateur Matteucci, Cavour's Florentine associate, Baron Poerio, the prisoner of Bomba in Naples, Count Mamiani, and others. With introductions from them I visited Genoa, Leghorn, Florence, Siena, Lucca, Prato, Bologna, Ravenna, Modena, Parma, Milan, and Lugano, at each place having interviews with the local governments of the Duchies—Prince Pepoli, Baron Ricasoli, Farini, etc., and the chiefs of the Nationalist movement. They furnished me with abundant documents and information. I also saw the levies of volunteers, and met Garibaldi in Romagna at the head of his own corps. The letters I wrote to the Morning Post *and to the* Daily News *were studied, I understand, by Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, then Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary respectively. These essays appeared in the* Westminster Review, *January 1861, six months before the death of Cavour (1908).*

IMPERSONATED under the great names and the marked characters of Cavour and Garibaldi, there stand confronted the two principles of policy, the aristocratic and the popular, the legal and the revolutionary; and the two great parties of order and of movement. Just as the French Revolution was, though principally social, yet in a great degree national; so indeed the Italian, though originally national, is in no small degree social. The former commenced in the effort to substitute one form of society for another, but it ended in a struggle for existence with its neighbours. The latter commenced a struggle for national existence, which it cannot carry to its issue without calling into action many of those elements out of which states are compacted, and facing at least some of the difficulties which disturb the union and harmony of orders, classes, and institutions.

On the one side we have seen the action of the

Government, or rather of one pre-eminent statesman, moulding the material and political strength of a small state into one compact power; divergent parties and purposes welded into a definite national policy. Next, the action of an established and strong system has been extended to foreign powers, and the whole machinery of international statecraft has been moved and guided by one strong and practised hand. At last, by a consummate stroke of daring and ingenuity, an auxiliary of overwhelming strength has been invoked to be used, watched, and eventually resisted. Beside which, a variety of local revolutions needed to be tempered and guided under legal forms and in the presence of retrograde parties; and a work of internecine struggle carried out under the jealous eyes of European Governments. The power which could do this must above all things have possessed patience, tenacity, self-command, experience, and practical sagacity, and no small share of those solid qualities out of which grow the orderly consolidations of states. Such an element existed in the rich and educated classes of Upper Italy, amongst the nobility, the landowners, the professions, and the trades of the towns; men who, sometimes pedantic and often overcautious, in the main retained the respect and confidence of the people, and to a man were ennobled by the national sentiment and zeal for order and rational government. Such men, whose services are too much depreciated because far from brilliant, formed in reality the strong conservative element by which alone the hot passions of the time have been mastered and guided; and they found in Cavour an exponent and chief who as far surpassed them all in his instinct towards systematic and orderly organisation, as in his power of grasping and controlling the more vigorous forces of the revolutionary element.

On the other side we have seen the conception of national existence matured and upheld through dreary years of suffering by a few brilliant intellects, gradually growing up as the religion of the finer minds, until it at last spread to be the passion of all that is generous in the national character. With them it became a principle too sacred to be tampered with, too vital to suffer excuse or delay, which demanded every sacrifice and was capable of every achievement. These ardent spirits addressed and found response in the hearts of the people; they repudiated the course of diplomatic intrigue as much as that of cautious legality. Believing more in enthusiasm than in organisation, and in self-devotion than in ability, they are impatient of the delays and scruples of the party of order. Devoted to their principle of national regeneration, they contemn those social influences which unless in moments of extraordinary excitement virtually dominate and represent every society. They thus quite misconceive and undervalue the weight bearing upon the future of their country from the will or policy of foreign states, as well as that of the rich, educated, or powerful individuals at home. With feelings which in every great crisis do indeed make the life of national movements, they had neither the patience nor the judgment necessary for sustained preparation, or for handling complicated situations and rival parties. Besides which, they have so little sympathy for those sentiments, interests, or habits, upon which the order and obedience of masses of men repose, that they force their own enthusiastic ideas upon populations quite incapable of adopting them, and govern alternately with untimely violence and fatal negligence.

Such are the elements which have been at work during the whole of this recent Italian movement,

occasionally acting harmoniously as one, then separately but in common, at times in open hostility ; but both indispensable and both inevitable. Cavour and Garibaldi, the leaders of these two parties, are not, however, their simple representatives. To all the habitual self-restraint, the knowledge and patient training of the Conservative classes, Cavour adds the full power of conceiving and using the enthusiasm of popular feeling. But with all his superiority to his own order and party, he does not and cannot inspire in others that passionate love of national existence, that moral elevation of character, that unfaltering self-devotion and perfect simplicity, which seem to beam from the countenance of the great popular hero. With his admirable versatility, sagacity, and knowledge of mankind, the great minister has been able to conduct with consummate skill an undertaking as great and difficult as ever fell to the lot of a statesman. But the very ability of his combinations and devices, the very brilliancy of his achievements, has proved in no small degree fatal to the moral strength of his position. He has mixed himself up in compromises and intrigues, and in deceptions which, however excusable in a politician, are fatal to the honour of a great national regenerator.

The services of Cavour to his country have been indeed indispensable ; without him neither the first possibility of life, nor the actual maintenance of existence, would have been practicable ; but he is not all, and he needed a very different colleague. All that is wanting in Cavour is supplied in Garibaldi. Utterly incapable of civil administration as the noble soldier has proved, he has inspired in the heart of every Italian emotions which no Government orator or diplomatist could awaken. When a ministry had completed a bargain which nothing but necessity (yet unproved)

could excuse, the voice of the bravest of the brave was heard in the council of the nation choked with shame and indignation. That broken protest sank deep into the hearts of the people; it taught them to rely on their own sense of dignity, and not on the hired favours of strangers. Again, when the enthusiasm of the nation was sinking under the chilling process of consolidation and diplomatic manœuvring, the same voice aroused them to a sense of the task still before them, and awoke the stifled cry of national reunion. By him the sense of public honour and pride, wounded to the quick by a humiliating sacrifice, was again called into activity. By him also the desire of national existence has been raised from a line of policy into a sacred duty, and patriotism has been elevated into a religion by which interest, habit, and personal ambition are to be transformed and disappear. Lastly, it was the Dictator alone who could give to the regeneration of Italy that character of brotherly reunion, of moral purification, of popular simplicity and intensity, which were little dreamt of in the Cabinet, the Court, or the Parliament.

Their country needed both. Each had his own great part to bear in the contest. It has not fallen to the lot of Italy to unite in one party, as in our own Revolution, the most fiery enthusiasm with the sternest discipline, or to create a leader who, like Cromwell, could be at once the devotee of a sacred cause and the consummate politician. With them, principle and policy have had a separate representative, and the claims of neither one nor the other should be exaggerated or undervalued. The passion of the soldier has been curbed by the providence of the statesman, whilst the skill of the minister has been ennobled by the energy of a hero. Without Garibaldi, the intensity no less than the character of the popular

feeling was in danger of being lost; had he been master, it would have been ruined in futile enterprises. As in every regular act, heart and mind must concur, the one to suggest, the other to control; so it has been the duty of the hero to inspire, of the statesman to guide the popular effort. That which the one felt, the other thought; the instinct of one has been matured by the experience of the other. The one has made his country respected, the other has made it honoured; the one has increased its power, the other has elevated its character. Arm and head, heart and brain, feeling and intelligence, may be contrasted, but cannot be separated without danger. It may not be possible, or even desirable, exactly to decide the share which each may have had in a common work; but it would be a profound mistake to exalt one service at the expense of the other, when both are indispensable.

In judging Cavour we are impressed by that in which he surpasses all modern statesmen — the faculty of prevision. In this, pre-eminently the first duty of a politician, the present century has shown no example at all comparable.[1] In him alone shall we find anything like a systematic and patient elaboration of a great national object. There, at least, we have an instance of a Government far ahead of its people, creating and directing an active public opinion towards one object, and subjecting the whole of its action to the slow work of preparing for a distant and gigantic enterprise. For ten years now the whole public action of Piedmont — material, political, and moral, in foreign as well as domestic policy; in Parliament as in Cabinet, from one end to

[1] In 1860 Bismarck was Ambassador at St. Petersburg, estranged from the Prussian ministry and little known outside diplomatic circles. Of course he ultimately made an even grander career. But his work was neither so difficult, nor so honourable, nor so sagacious as that of Cavour (1908).

the other of the public service—has been centred in the effort to prepare for that part which she has lately been called on to perform. It was from the joint action of all these means—by diplomacy, by public opinion, by material organisation, by attention to the finances, the army, the railways, the schools, the ecclesiastical bodies, and the civil service of the nation, that Count Cavour has looked for the success of his undertaking.

The history of his administration affords a complete instance of a statesman who works out a profound policy with unfailing sagacity and determination. The details of management have been no less admirable than the scheme itself. The perfect publicity and distinctness of the object sought, and the harmony with which all developments of national activity fell into the grand purpose, is the best proof of the soundness and vitality of the policy. No other could afford any basis for sustained and combined action. Such a type of Government belongs, indeed, more to the past times in which States have been created, than to these latter days, in which they are feebly or carelessly governed. It contains nothing of that irregular and incoherent movement which, since the French Revolution, has marked more or less the European ministries. To carry a few popular measures, to provide for the wants or dangers of the present, to undertake or surrender a course of action under the sway of public opinion, to assume in Europe that position which for the moment seemed most conducive to the national prestige, has been the crown of the aims of any modern ministry.

The work accomplished by Count Cavour belongs rather to that order of statesmanship which has created nations, changed the future history of Europe, and consolidated new eras of social and political life. For

the true parallels or rivals to him, we must look, not amongst the Palmerstons or Talleyrands, or even the Peels or Guizots of our day, but amongst the company of William of Orange, of Frederick II., and George Washington. Not that he in any great degree resembles any of these great men ; he may not equal some of them in moral elevation of character, though undoubtedly his mental capacities are not wholly unequal to theirs. But it is to the class of great creative statesmen, and not to that of able administrators or consummate diplomatists, that he belongs. It is not from such men that we can look for the organisation of all the conflicting principles and forces in a highly cultivated nation, and the formation of a great living whole out of the scattered fragments of an oppressed race. It is a peculiar genius for government which can grasp as a central idea that one principle of action which can alone give cohesion and vitality to disorganised communities, can make it practical enough for the most unenlightened, and broad enough for the most aspiring ; and at the same time develop it in action under all the restraints imposed by prescription and the sluggishness which timidity and selfishness impose on large classes of mankind. The conception of national unity is indeed primarily due to those impassioned thinkers of all schools who upheld the sacred tradition of the Italian race, and in perhaps the highest degree to that unhappy genius who was himself the least capable of creating it.

To Mazzini, it is true, as thinker, poet, preacher, or agitator—as indeed anything short of politician—is due in this generation the strength of that principle which is the very life of Italy at this day. But however we admit his claims as a teacher, which as a conspirator he has done so much to nullify, it is clear that had not Cavour found means to make that notion

of Italian nationality patent to the mind of all Europe, and made it a practical and intelligible creed to all classes of Italians, forcing the principle forward under a constant shield of order and right, the very idea itself would long have remained in the breasts of the small circle of noble and intelligent spirits. It is not by eloquent appeals or by desperate self-sacrifice that the mass of the public can be penetrated. It has been the task of Count Cavour, by a long series of public acts, all within the sphere of sound and legal administration, to awaken in the minds of the great body of his countrymen a sense of national right, duty, and dignity, and to conciliate the spirit of freedom with that of subordination to one powerful will.

The difficulties which met Cavour on his first accession to power were such as even now it is difficult thoroughly to estimate. The defeat of Novara had left the Piedmontese kingdom humiliated and weakened, and yet fatally implicated in the insurrectionary movement which each succeeding event in Europe contributed to discredit. There the Church, and a semi-feudal landed aristocracy possessed a strong traditional power. The whole of the administration of the little State was singularly backward and imperfect. Its legal and its commercial system, its municipal institutions, the organisation of its army, of education, of the public service, and of religious bodies, its tariff, its roads, and system of communication, and lastly, its own national unity, were below those of nearly every other State in the Peninsula, except the Roman itself. In the other provinces of Italy, monarchical sentiments had not begun to exist, and national greatness was known only in the language of insurrectionary appeals. All the sad honours of the late campaign had been won by the old municipal spirit, and Manin and Garibaldi had upheld the glory of historic republics. The

strength with which upon the shattered efforts of the national uprising the old empire of the foreigner had been established, had crushed out all but the hope of feeble palliatives and evasions in the minds of the more cautious, and desperate conspiracies in those of the bolder. Parties were swaying between hopeless submission and hopeless rebellion, amidst a state of things in Europe which seemed at each step to be extinguishing the last embers of revolution. By degrees two distinct courses of action became visible, and two rival parties made their existence felt.

The constitutional or moderate party adopted one; the party of action or the national party the other. It has been the work of Cavour to vivify and fuse the two. On the one hand, the party which comprised the rich and noble classes, the more timid natures, and the bulk of the commercial public, bowed down by the great calamity of the last effort, preached against any new risk or immediate action, looked only for the future to the action of time and increased intelligence in the people, and hoped by patient conduct and ingenious management to alleviate rather than extinguish the national degradation whenever the circumstances of the day or the public opinion of Europe offered an opportunity. Violently denouncing all extreme measures, and resolute to expose themselves to no fresh disaster, they hoped to ameliorate the position of their country by legal resistance, and by the means of those liberal institutions which survived the wreck, by appealing to the public opinion and Governments of Europe, and in particular by the introduction of a parliamentary system. Opposed to this was the policy of the revolutionary party, who, having their headquarters at Milan, possessed no insignificant strength both at Genoa and Turin. Under this head belong all those parties, whether republican or monarchist,

who looked forward to *insurrection* as the means of restitution, and laboured by conspiracies, associations, and propagandism towards the freedom of the Italian race by a general explosion of revolutionary energy.

This party indeed was animated by a far deeper devotion to the common cause, and felt more deeply the miseries of the present, than the supporters of the more patient and cooler policy. They felt indeed the immense necessity for action, and unhesitating confidence in the capacity of their race. They saw, moreover, the grand truth that all the patience and prudence of their rivals never would result in creating that deep national enthusiasm which alone could produce a restored nation; and that the future of their country could no longer be left to ministerial ingenuity, but must be made the first and last of public duties.

Standing as we do upon the pedestal of past events, we can now discern that neither one policy nor the other separately had a chance of success. With all their efforts towards material and domestic advancement, with their old ideas of regular and peaceful efforts, the moderates could never have awakened the sentiment of national reunion, or forced upon Piedmont the danger and the glory of the national chieftainship. They possessed no means and little taste for reaching the popular sympathies, and were devoid of all conception of a social regeneration as bound up in the national revival. Nor could their doctrines attract the nobler spirits or the finer intellects, whilst they compromised with the great end of all political life. Under their system Piedmont might have gone on for years increasing in ignoble prosperity, distinguished from Belgium or Holland by a finer army or a nobler soil.

Nor did the bare programme of the revolutionists

offer a more fortunate career. The long series of disastrous insurrections into which the unhappy illusions of Mazzini led his generous but credulous followers, seems to prove beyond all doubt the impossibility of really organising a national insurrection in a country so thoroughly shackled with the sanction of every Government in Europe. Their appeal to the spirit of their countrymen, whilst it does honour to the sincerity of their own devotion, shows but too sadly how much they had mistaken the vis inertiæ of the bulk of the people. And if to be always fancying a passion for national independence in masses of the country population, to whom the very name of Italy was a word without meaning or sense, were not enough to condemn them as politicians, it was a fatal delusion to be preaching insurrection to a people amongst whom the rich and the noble held the paramount social and political influence, classes who by the very conditions of their existence must resent with indignation any suggestion or attempt towards revolutionary or social convulsion. Had such a party succeeded in establishing their supremacy, the future of the Italian race would have sunk more hopelessly at each successive disaster which they had provoked. Outcasts at once from all the conservative elements of their nation, and hunted down by its oppressors, they would have served only to renew continual protests ever to be extinguished in blood. Discarding, it seems despising, that material strength and organisation which they did not, and could not possess, and attributing to the moral strength which they had an extent which was wholly delusive, they could do little but keep alive a sacred principle which they were incapable of making triumphant. Each insurrection would have ended in fresh physical suffering and deeper moral prostration. Had Italy possessed no sons

but them, they might have been now wandering over Europe like the Poles, and showing us that Italian nationality existed only in the minds of the thoughtful and the ardent as a tradition or an aspiration.

It has been the task of Count Cavour to bring about the fusion of these two parties, each of which maintained an idea which was indispensable to real success. The party of order saw the necessity for regular and patient development of the national resources; the party of action the duty of rousing the popular energy. From the one he took their notion of the end, from the other their view of the method of national policy. With the one he adopted as his watchword the unity and independence of Italy, with the other he proclaimed as his policy the regular and public reorganisation of the State. With the one he saw that no genuine progress was possible, unless by accepting the conditions of the political and social system existing; with the other he insisted that all political and material development must be animated by a leading principle, and subordinated to one paramount duty.

Seen from a distance, his Government presents itself to us as one series of sagacious yet aspiring enterprises. With every fresh success he has risen in audacity and vigour, until we have seen at last the revolutionary energy of the outlaw matched by that of the responsible minister. He has shown, indeed, that a great revolution can be carried out without a reckless use of convulsive measures, but not without rising to a true conception of all the forces in society which underlie its external forms and laws. He has carried out the work of Italian nationality by repudiating, on the one hand, the desperate aid of mere insurrection, but on the other not without boldly advancing on the path of organic revolution.

Cavour

The career of Count Cavour exhibits the somewhat unusual case of a politician who grows less and not more conservative by experience. His progress has been one from unobtrusive administrative and economic studies to the conduct of astounding revolutionary movements. First he is the industrious writer on financial operations, then the minister of material and political reforms, lastly the leader of a nation in a struggle for existence. There was little in his early life to foreshadow the formidable character in which he now appears.

Almost the first act which it fell to his duty to carry out, the commercial treaty with France, was an emblem of his whole subsequent system. By that treaty, indeed, Piedmont surrendered far more advantages than she obtained; but she obtained from it the priceless gain of the foundation of a French alliance. In the words in which the minister defended his policy in Parliament we have indeed the key of his whole career, a reorganisation of the whole strength of the country to be combined with foreign alliances as the basis of a national war. "To this treaty," said he, "we are moved by considerations superior to any economical or administrative interest. A crisis may yet, and probably will soon arise in which Sardinia might need, if not the material, at least the moral support of France. This treaty may not give us all the financial advantages which we have a right to expect, but it will strengthen that precious union which ought to exist between the free peoples of the west of Europe." It was the same idea to which belong all those commercial treaties which marked the year 1851, with Belgium, England, Switzerland,

Greece, the Zollverein, and Holland. By them, together with the second convention with France, an entire revolution was introduced in the fiscal system of the kingdom, and Piedmont took her place as a Free Trade State in a manner to which no other continental power could pretend. The sagacity of these measures has indeed been amply proved by an increased and increasing revenue; by the stimulus given to production, and the development of material prosperity.

But it is to take a very narrow view of his policy to suppose that it was as a free-trader, or economist, that Count Cavour carried out these measures. They are political no less than commercial measures. Their prime object was to introduce Sardinia as the equal of the enlightened and progressive States of Europe, to ensure the moral support, if not the actual alliance, of France and England, to raise the country up out of the catalogue of obscure or satellite kingdoms, and invest her in the eyes of her citizens and of all Italians with a European dignity and importance.

Nor was this idea less conspicuous in any of those administrative reforms under which the whole organisation of the country has so marvellously expanded. That system of railways which is now the completest which any Continental State can show, if not quite so thickly set as the Belgian or the English, possesses a symmetry and a common design which show the work of a dominant purpose directing their whole extent. There is something quite strategic in their plan, and we see them laid out as in the array of an army with a first and second line of defence; a double communication between the strong stations, and a general concentration of the whole. And the providence and value of this work was abundantly manifested in the recent campaign, where we saw Turin saved from

invasion, and gigantic manœuvres executed by the sole agency of this new engine of war.

It is again to the same general policy that so many of the other labours of that ministry belong: the postal conventions with the other States of Italy, by means of which Piedmontese journals and information penetrated the Peninsula; the reconstruction and reorganisation of the mercantile and naval ports, the reform of the finances, of the banks, the re-assessment of the land-tax. Finally came that by which the ministerial policy was to find its weapon—the entire reorganisation of the army, and the systematic armament of the fortresses which formed the key of the internal defence. It was by this series of administrative reforms, and the energy and sagacity displayed in such repeated instances of sound practical statesmanship, that the great bulk of the nation gradually came to place its confidence in a minister who had so strikingly increased the prosperity and activity of the country. But if the policy of Count Cavour had rested there, he might have been the organ of the Conservative classes, without ever becoming the chief of the active energy of the progressive. It was necessary to assume an attitude which could arrest the imagination and appeal to the heart of the bulk of the nation, Italian as well as Piedmontese. He must proclaim a principle which could really enlist that smouldering but irresistible force of resistance, and unite in one battle-cry the unguided will of thousands of ardent spirits. To satisfy and to restrain the passionate hopes of men to whom fear and despair were unknown, and soothe the heaving agitation of overgoaded populations, needed some more powerful engine than financial arrangements or amended tariffs.[1]

[1] It will be remembered that the whole of these remarks applies to the condition of Italy in 1860 (1908).

To exist, Piedmont must head the revolution. It was this which none of the leading men of the country seemed adequately to conceive. It was this which has been the basis of Cavour's policy. Slowly he began to announce a more energetic system.

The diplomatic struggle with Austria in defence of the Lombard exiles whose property had been sequestered, first exhibited him in the arena of European politics, and gave its true stamp to his policy. Then Italians for the first time saw the audacity and skill with which the minister could meet the high-handed violence of the great Empire. When after the failure (at least outwardly) of the most powerful appeals and protests to Austria, the Sardinian envoy was withdrawn from Vienna, the full significance of the struggle became manifest. It was a great step thus to have met the common enemy with a defiance, and to have pronounced before the public opinion of Europe a crushing indictment, and carried off the approval of the Governments of England and France.

But there was an enemy at home yet nearer than the Austrian whom it was necessary to humble and defy. Whilst the Papal Church retained its prestige and organisation, the union and independence of Italy were alike impossible.

Rome yet possessed the strength to impede every step towards national greatness, and the strength of Rome lay in the monastic orders. It is a singular fact that during the provisional régime in Tuscany and the Duchies of Central Italy, the feelings of the clergy, and with them of the rural populations, were seen to vary exactly in proportion to the numbers and power of the monastic bodies. To strike down and shatter this priestly army was the object achieved with entire success by the conventual legislation by which all orders not engaged in preaching, teaching, or heal-

ing were suppressed. By this measure the Papacy was humiliated and its strength crippled. The rapidity, firmness, and moderation with which this great social change was effected (unattended by any of those evils which have too often followed upon such an act), showed the minister superintending without a single failure a real revolution in society, and conciliating the strict claims of law, property, and order with a scheme involving a most organic change and kindling opposite passions.

Neither the fury of the Catholic party nor the excitement of their extreme opponents could shake the Government from its policy of long-matured advance. The part which this measure alone has played in the recent agitation towards annexation to Sardinia is very remarkable. Both sides feel its significance, and the resolution and boldness displayed in it by the ministry as much added to their strength as the senile anathemas of the Vatican exposed and degraded the Catholic party.

The material strength of the country having been thus raised to the highest efficiency, and the domestic enemies effectually subdued, Count Cavour was prepared to enter upon that branch of his policy which involved the active co-operation of the European powers. The war against Russia offered the means, and even made necessary immediate action. The opportunity was given of at once entering into the circle of the European States, whilst the late outbreak at Milan, and the evident excitement of the republican party, proved the danger of a policy of inaction. Count Cavour accordingly offered to the allies the vigorous co-operation of the Sardinian State, and despatched a force which nearly equalled and at one time exceeded that of the British army. By this enterprise the ambition and self-reliance of the army were awakened,

great impulse was given to its organisation and strength, the disaster of Novara was blotted out, and the credit of Piedmont again placed beyond a rival in Italy.

It was by its indirect rather than by its direct consequences that this measure must be judged. The alliance with England and France, by which the Sardinian territories were actually guaranteed during the war, and which promised for many years the closest relations, at once raised the little kingdom into a European Power. The moral effect of the protest, uttered at the Congress of Paris, formed a real step in the history of Italy ; nor was the language of the minister in the Parliament other than was justified by facts: "From henceforth the Italian question has entered on the order of European questions. The cause of Italy has been maintained, not by demagogues and revolutionaries, but by the plenipotentiaries of France and England. From the Congress it has passed to the tribunal of public opinion. The struggle will be long, and need prudence and calmness ; but our cause will triumph."

Indeed the State papers which that occasion drew forth before the public attention of Europe, were such as possessed no ordinary significance. That presented to the allied powers in April 1856, by the vigour of its attack, by its unanswerable logic, and still more by the perfect moderation of its tone, could not fail to place the Italian question in a new light, and force upon the most conservative minds in Europe the necessity for acquiescing in important change. The conflict waged in the field as well as that in the council sank deeply into the minds of the whole Italian race, the former chiefly into that of the people, the latter into the convictions of thinking men. And if in the recent elevation of Sardinia to the chieftainship

of the nation, we see the influence of the glory of the Crimean campaign, we see in it no less the impression caused on the more vigorous of the older parties by the attitude which the kingdom had assumed in the councils of Europe. This it was that gave the minister the support of the republican and purely revolutionary chiefs. Now they saw opening to them a real prospect of achieving by some not distant effort the entire emancipation of the country with the sanction and even the co-operation of some of the European powers. Then they began to see the real drift of a policy which looked forward to national independence, not by setting up Piedmont as a fortunate model for imitation or an example of prudent resignation, but by training her whole energies for the hour of national struggle, and preparing the way for success by a hearty co-operation of parties and long-sighted combination of European policy.

With regard to this participation of Piedmont in the Crimean war very opposite judgments have been formed. It may be said with much force that to declare war with a friendly power which menaced no possible right or interest of the State, to burden the struggling resources of the country with a new and indefinite weight, to have rushed unprovoked into the midst of a gigantic struggle ; in a word, to have undertaken a distant war for the sole purpose of deriving therefrom glory and alliances, was an act of very doubtful prudence, and of hardly doubtful morality.

Right or wrong, the war resulted almost as a necessity from the part which Sardinia had undertaken. To maintain her very existence and tranquillity she was forced to show herself prepared for a speedy struggle with the Austrian—to enter upon that struggle with a chance of success she needed at least the moral support of the Western Powers—and that support she

could not hope to obtain unless by boldly identifying herself with their foreign European policy. The Lombard campaign was only possible after the Congress of Paris, and admission to the Congress would have been impossible had it not been for the victory on the Tchernaia. It may be that the task of national regeneration is one which after all the sword is not competent to effect; but so far as force or policy could effect it, the work has been most thoroughly successful, and if the Crimean expedition was one which by itself has no adequate justification of right, it has been at least gilded over by amazing results, and received a certain consecration from the cause which it has so incalculably served.

The work hitherto had been one only of preparation for the struggle. The time was come for the actual effort. The aid of France was sought, and obtained. Nothing could be a greater mistake than to regard the interference of France as the result of an individual impulse of the Emperor, or any special manœuvre of the minister. It is bound up with the whole system of Count Cavour's policy, of which it forms the crown. By it that policy must stand or fall. With reference to that his public acts must be explained and judged. Imminent as that French intervention was in 1848, with the whole course of events leading up to it over a period of ten years, popular as the object of the war was in France, it must be looked on even more as the issue of the situation of affairs in Europe than of any individual will, however powerful and apparently capricious, and as having justified the sagacity of Lord Palmerston, who wrote in November 1848, "The glory of delivering Italy to the Alps from the Austrian yoke will compensate, in the eyes of the French people, many sacrifices and great efforts. The opportunity

for invoking French intervention in Italy will not long be wanting. The Lombards would be ready to furnish it directly they knew that the Government and people of France were disposed to answer the call. It is hardly possible to imagine that an Austrian army could resist a numerous and powerful French army, seconded and supported by a general rising of the Italians." In any case, such an alliance was the consummation of the policy of Count Cavour. Under his hands Piedmont had undertaken to solve the national difficulty. She was, indeed, impelled to it by a fatal necessity to preserve at once her independence, her tranquillity, and her throne. Had not, indeed, the upper classes under their noble chief placed themselves at the head of the national movement, their power would in a few years have been wrenched from them by the party of the revolution to renew the policy and disaster of Novara. What, then, were the means by which the end was to be obtained?

The last campaign has proved how utterly powerless would have been the most desperate efforts of Sardinia alone against the entire force of Austria. Nor were we to add to these efforts, as the revolutionary party insist, the insurrection throughout Italy; it is not easy to assert that it would have improved the chances of national success. This could not escape the eye of the man who had evoked and weighed the resources of his country, whilst he repudiates, and perhaps undervalues, the power of insurrection. He was forced then to look for some external assistance; nor is it conceivable that he could have persisted in a long course of provocation and defiance of the common enemy with the ultimate intention of commencing war with no forces but the compact army of the king, and the desultory fury of unarmed populations. Such an idea is as much con-

tradicted by the character of the man, as by the whole history of his acts. Some external aid was indispensable. It presented itself only in two forms.

Italy might meet Austria either with the assistance of one or more of the Western Powers, or might wait until she was a prey to the mortal throes of revolution within. Even now, as we witness the slow dissolution of that tenacious power struggling so long after a death-wound, we cannot fail to see that to have waited for that crisis might have been to wait until safety, honour, and self-respect had been lost at home. Each fresh act of provocation thrust Sardinia nearer to the inevitable conflict, and necessitated a still bolder act to confirm and extend the prestige of the last. Sardinia was forced by an irresistible power to advance incessantly upon a path where success was only possible at the price of invoking the assistance of the foreigner. To have relied, as the revolutionary party insist, upon the unaided strength of Italy, means simply to have submitted to an internal revolution as a preparation, and to have established a democratic republic upon the ruins of all those conservative elements of the country, and of the consolidation of the social system, out of which alone, as we conceive, permanent success was possible. *Italia farà da se* was the watchword of Mazzini at the opening of the war. But the very weapon with which, as he conceives, she ought to fight—the insurrection after the model of the year 1793—involves the previous suppression of the whole force of the upper classes, to whom such a weapon is abhorrent and self-destructive.

To the Western Powers, then, or more distinctly to France, Count Cavour directed his hopes. Hazardous as the cast was, it cannot be proved to have been desperate. All those advantages which it seemed to offer have been obtained from it; and very few of

the evils which were foretold have come to pass. He cannot be said to have conjured a spirit which he was unable to control or to resist; nor can any reasonable mind assert that the loss of Nice counterbalances the creation of Italy. It may be that the recent war has not adequately solved the difficulty. The assistance of France may have produced a moral injury to the future of Italy. But all such evils were involved in any possible course of active effort. No conceivable policy, in such a case, could have been without its own inherent defect. It may be that the European statesman, or even the Italian patriot, might deplore the intervention of France; but it would be preposterous to condemn a great practical politician from seizing the only available engine of acting on the immediate destinies of his country.

The assistance of the foreigner having been decided upon, the task before Count Cavour was to direct the Italian revolution by means of conservative authorities, and with the least possible risk of political or social convulsion, and at the same time to call out the whole warlike energy of the nation. It must be admitted that he succeeded far better in the former than in the latter portion of his duty. The liberated populations exhibited indeed far more sagacity than energy, and finally achieved their freedom by a fortunate deficiency of vehemence and excitement. It cannot be doubted that an almost suspicious reliance was placed upon order and diplomacy. The fact is that the whole conduct of the movement had been placed in the hands of the recognised heads of the social system, and was left to the upper classes to direct by skill without any admixture of revolutionary convulsion. This was especially obvious in Tuscany (which was but a type of the other provisional Governments), where the entire guidance was placed in the hands of a real

aristocracy of birth and wealth, of men possessing the leading territorial and social influence in the country, full of the conservative instincts of an educated and historic order, and united by long study, and an almost pedantic trust in the machinery of orderly and systematic government.

Such as the Tuscan rulers were, such were the Parmesan, the Modenese, and the Bolognese, in a greater or less degree; and the whole of these governments were created under the influence, and in most cases by the direct act, of Count Cavour, and were even after his fall inspired mainly by his counsels, and held together by the National Society which was the organ and promoter of his peculiar views and policy. The exigencies of the situation had all been foreseen and provided for by the minister, and he relied for the success of the revolution to be accomplished under the shield of France exclusively on the strength, authority, and ability of the conservative and wealthy classes, assisted by all the educated intelligence which they could command. It is true that but for a bolder and less far-sighted effort, the population of Central Italy might have sunk from want of military energy and enthusiasm; but it is not the less true that the whole attitude, sobriety, and pertinacity of the resistance they made to the Peace of Villafranca was directly due to the sagacity of the statesman who had placed the direction of a revolution in the hands of men who belonged to the party of order by instinct, position, and education.

More recent events have shown Count Cavour assuming a bolder attitude, and earning almost the name of a revolutionary leader. The connivance in the attempt of Garibaldi, and the invasion and annexation of the Papal and Neapolitan territories, belong wholly to the policy of a man who had risen to a full

sense of a critical situation. The manner in which he has used, aided, and then controlled Garibaldi; the skill with which the republican energy has been let loose, to be at the very moment of destruction reined in and pacified; the audacity with which a startling onslaught was made upon the Head of the National Church, and a friendly monarch attacked and besieged, without on the one hand calling forth revolutionary passions, or on the other the hostility of jealous foreign powers, is undoubtedly a proof of political aptitude, such as makes the turning-point in the destinies of a nation. In these later enterprises the true force of the statesman's capacity is seen, for they exhibit him as the chief of a revolution of which he has hitherto appeared mainly as the controller.

Schemes such as these belong to those exceptional crises in which a statesman must rise above the rules of prudence, legality, and moderation, or be irretrievably lost, and act, if he acts at all, in a full consciousness that the safety of the people is above all law. It is by such acts throughout history that the existence of nations has been preserved by men who have broken through at once all the habits, traditions, and laws of society, under the overwhelming duty of the salvation of the nation. Men will always be found to object to Cromwell violations of the constitution; to Danton suppression of law; to William the Silent duplicity and intrigue: but politicians must be judged by their power of commanding the crisis in which they are placed, and the average of their good and evil must be struck by the practical necessities of their task. On any politician who dares to violate constitutions, laws, or treaties, the heaviest responsibility must weigh, to be removed alone by the verdict of history and the conscientious sanction of public opinion.

Beneath the logic of pedants and fanatics, the

public instinct feels that the law of nations in no true sense could apply between the provincial States of Italy, or govern relations which rest on a condition of virtual revolution and war. When the Sardinian armies invaded the Marches and Umbria they invaded the States of a power with whom they had long been waging a deadly but informal war. When they hunted the Neapolitan pretender to his last retreat, they were only crushing an outcast tyrant and driving forth an incendiary partisan. Legal pedantry and hypocritical formalism apart, it is true that Count Cavour has the right to say "We are Italy! we act in her name." The judgment of free nations has welcomed that which does indeed bear the outward form of the triumph of might over right, and the hopes of order and national independence have been raised high by these acts of violent invasion. Yet not the less must we feel admiration for the sagacity and courage of a policy which so far transcends the regions in which ordinary statesmen dwell, and belongs to the extraordinary efforts of decisive emergencies.

Count Cavour is a politician of that high order which unites the most opposite qualities, and resumes in himself the various forces of an era. He embodies the cause of monarchy, order, and constitution, whilst working out a revolution and founding a new nation. At once the sagacious economist, the consummate minister, and the dictator of a crisis, he is by turns laborious and energetic, subtle and impetuous, ingenious and audacious, practical and profound. Now it is his task to calm the agitation of a nation, then to call it to a struggle for life; now he imposes on it his own strong will, then addresses and instructs its judgment; sometimes convincing in the Parliament, sometimes stirring the public heart, sometimes

guiding unseen the machinery of diplomacy and parties.

He has the true vein of a great statesman. His whole action is practical, relative, and instinctive. His policy rests upon principle; yet he is never the slave of his theories. He can rise to the grandeur of ideas, yet is never carried away by illusions. An inflexible purpose may bow before necessity and storms; and out of every emergency still grasp the true clue upwards. No modern politician insists so firmly upon theory; none so consistently develops it into action; and none is so little cramped by it in practice. His love of order never stiffens into oppression; legality with him stops short of formalism; his mastery of logic is forgotten when logic has ceased to be of use. With a turn for diplomacy worthy of Talleyrand, his art is restrained to its due place and function. A master of party politics, he is never greater than when he has ceased to be a parliamentary leader. Conservative by nature, he knows the value of institutions; in the hour of crisis he sees in them nothing but forms. He has gauged popular emotion; he neither mistakes its strength nor forgets its fickleness.

With an appetite for power like Richelieu, he loves to rest upon public opinion; and being a real dictator, he acts in the spirit of a responsible minister. With a native insight into character, there are no men and no parties whom he hesitates to use; fanaticism or industry, authority or enthusiasm, craft or heroism, are instruments which he employs and controls. He can lay deep plans without being tortuous; be politic without falsehood; and strike an unexpected blow without treachery. In the State he grasps a concentration of power, which he wields without selfishness, and which is yielded without jealousy. In Parliament

he can solicit the support of a majority without stooping to party triumphs. In the tribune he seeks to convince, not to confute; to win confidence, not votes. He never perorates, but argues; generally careless in language, always keen in logic, sometimes rising into moving eloquence, sometimes overcoming by inherent energy.

In the Cabinet he is master of diplomatic fence, yet his logic is ever drawn from public right and plain principle. The exquisite skill with which he crushes his opponent's case is only equalled by the substantial justice of his own cause. His State-papers would be models of art if they were not standards of historic fact. With all his instinctive love of order and law, he sees that these are not ends but means. In a crisis he can rise superior to any notion but that of public safety and duty. To habitual industry in preparation he unites an impetuous rapidity of execution; and however careful in husbanding his resources, he is prodigal of them in action. His most daring schemes are all within the limits of reasonable safety; if he oversteps legality, he remains true to right. In a word, he is in our day the single example of a ruler who governs by native superiority and that willing homage which ennobles the giver and the receiver. He shows us how power can be gathered into one hand, yet be but the expression of national will. Nor less is he an instance of a politician who conserves whilst he changes; who conciliates order and movement, tradition and expansion, the past and the present; who innovates without convulsion, and modifies without destruction. Thus he is to us the type of the real popular dictator, and the statesman of true conservative progress.

Garibaldi

Such are the characteristics of Count Cavour, and they are those essentially of the statesman. But they represent but one element of the Italian movement alone. The sagacity, self-restraint, and perseverance which have marked it are amply exhibited in him, but for all that has given it life, poetry, and moral grandeur, we must find a very different representative. The virtues, aspirations, and powers which we attribute to Garibaldi belong not either to the minister himself, nor to the classes of whom he is the chief. There exists beneath the surface an intensely popular element in this Italian revolution, showing in reality nearly all the features which have distinguished the effervescence of new ideas in the mind of the whole people, and recalling in the strength of its enthusiasm, in the electric contagion of its ideas, and in its influence on the moral sentiments, the spirit which can be seen to move through nations in great crises of their history.

We can thus best understand the heaving and agitation of the mass of the people, a new idea sweeping over them like an epidemic, kindling in the hearts of man and woman a fanatical enthusiasm, moving man to man and class to class, elevating debased populations into momentary impulses of dignity and virtue, and inspiring the finer tempers with unwonted fires of self-sacrifice and daring. Thus it was that in silent cities the people has sprung forth as under some sudden frenzy, that armies have laid down their arms at the magical influence of a name or a voice, that men of wealth, position, and refinement have hastened to stand shoulder to shoulder with the peasant on bloody battlefields or more deadly camps, and have given up every earthly

interest, and even the convictions of their whole lives, in defence of a sacred cause. We are far too apt in presence of the discipline which has been submitted to, and of the manifest inferiority of the Southern population, to underrate the extent as well as the intensity of the enthusiasm of the people of the North. The immense depopulation of Venetia, the 100,000 men who since the beginning of the war have volunteered into the different armies, the sacrifices borne, and the heroism shown by whole classes of men, and the resolution and patriotism of the bulk of the people of the North, cannot be effaced by any tales of failure and indifference in detail, or the worthlessness of the demoralised cities or barbarous peasantry of the South.

It is the army of Garibaldi, and their leader himself, who most worthily represent all this element of the movement. With all their dexterity and experience the supporters of the statesman do not adequately embody the vitality and elevation of the popular instinct. The heroic soldier and his men belong not to the men who can guide and administer a State, but they are of those who fought with Manin the desperate defence of Venice, and maintained the honour of their capital against the treacherous insolence of France,—of men who, like the Bandiera, Bassi, or Ciceroacchio, have been murdered in cold blood, who have spent their lives in prison and exile, and lived a long martyrdom for their cause. Without the spirit which sustained these men in the dungeon or on the scaffold, it would have been impossible that the sacred tradition could have kept its purity and strength. These are the men, and the party to which they belonged, who have taught the youth of Italy to feel the holiness of their cause, who have clothed it with an irradiating splendour, and

required from its supporters a devotion and a moral elevation unsurpassed. To them it is due that the expulsion of the stranger means a real national regeneration, and that the future of Italy is made to rest upon the individual worth of the citizens. They are the men who first saw and preached the duty of absolute unity, of the consolidation of States, and the fraternity of classes and orders, and who upheld the singleness and directness of purpose to the one great end. To them is due chiefly that which gives moral dignity to the Italian people, and but for them the sagacity or energy of the statesmen would have dealt only with untutored masses and a lifeless, passionless multitude.

It is quite consistent with this view to disbelieve most strongly in the capacity of such men for government or direction. With the most emphatic conviction of the utter hopelessness of any revolution attempted under the control of such men, it is impossible to refuse to the revolutionary parties, whether under the name of Republican or National, Mazzinist or Garibaldian, the credit of having set in motion an action of which others were the more fortunate directors. Mazzini, Garibaldi, Guerrazzi, or Bertani have abundantly manifested, on one occasion after another, their incapacity for civil organisation and rule, and the public instinct is quite justified in looking upon their ascendency with unconquerable aversion. But as agitators their influence has been indispensable. It is true that in 1848 they led the national cause to ruin, but it is equally clear that their principles prepared it for triumph in 1860. More and more we are forced to see how powerfully the abortive struggle of 1848 acted upon the national mind, and led up to the success we have lately witnessed. The Lombard

and Venetian insurrections, the popular votes of annexation in the Duchies, the heroism of the defence of Rome, had educated the masses with a sense of their duty and an instinct towards union.

The effort of 1848 was crushed by force, but not the less was it a moral triumph. It awakened the national conscience, and penetrated the depressed multitude. It planted the standard of the nation, and taught the creed of unity and the religion of patriotism. The task of the statesmen of Piedmont was but to moderate, guide, and organise the irrepressible spirit of freedom, which was the outgrowth of the rising of 1848. More and more do we see in 1860, under happier and wiser guidance, the noble enthusiasm and aspirations of 1848. But that effort was made notoriously under the auspices and direction of the Republicans. If we measure out to them our condemnation of the unwisdom which brought them to ruin, we should no less give them credit for the spirit which at least they succeeded in inspiring. With no stain upon its honour, with no possible charge against it but that of misfortune and misconception, the effort of 1848 cannot be stigmatised as the work of incendiaries or demagogues. The great agitator to whom that movement owes at once its energy and its unsuccess may indeed have been the victim of desperate illusions, but wilful ignorance only can charge him with baseness, or downright malice only represent him as a sanguinary fanatic. Whatever faults may have been committed by the Republican Governments in Italy during 1848, no single charge of violence or selfishness has ever been established against them. And those who have really had any knowledge of these leaders know them to possess a singleness of purpose, a strength of principle, and a touching love of their country and their countrymen, which surpasses

in depth and purity anything that their rivals or their maligners can show.

Whatever may be the judgment passed upon this party and the true character of its members, certain it is that Garibaldi himself is its truest and fullest representative. It is mere self-deception to deny that he really belongs to that body with whom his whole life has been passed, and all his ideas derived. It is much the fashion to revile all the revolutionary leaders amongst men, who forget that they thereby are discrediting the whole previous history of their favourite hero, and must wilfully distort the plainest evidence of his acts. In spite of the most convincing proofs that he looks on Mazzini still with friendship and trust, that all his friends belong to the old Republican parties, and all his acts are dictated by the old doctrines of insurrection, the mere fact of his allegiance to the king is supposed to place him in the constitutional party. The fact is, that he belongs to the revolutionary classes, by his whole nature, habits, history, and situation. He shares with them his greatness of heart, and draws from them the false theories of his political creed. He amplifies and exalts their virtues, but he is not the less involved in their illusions and defects. The highest political virtues are not incompatible with great political incompetence, and the noblest elevation of character cannot exclude fatal intellectual errors.

It is by his character and not by his intellect that Garibaldi holds his sway. It is not by what he directly does that he inspires his country, but by the mysterious influence of his spirit and life. In his story the humblest and most ignorant can feel instinctively the worth of a life unstained by one selfish act or worldly motive ; the simple majesty of a man to whose eye his fellow-men are seen as man to man, stripped of every

circumstance of accident or rank, men in whose soul burns nothing but the fire which makes martyrs and heroes. It is this power which gives him a moral influence, which neither king nor minister can approach. Not merely through his own country does this influence extend. It spreads strangely through the extent of civilised Europe. We have seen that his name inspires a something more than passing sympathy, and is mixed with convictions of unusual tenacity. Strange stories are told of artisans in Berlin, worshipping in the streets at a shrine of St. Garibaldi, and how his name stirred the blood of the Faubourg St. Antoine in Paris. To the workmen of Glasgow or Lyons, as much as of Naples or Milan, he represents the claims of their own order, and from Poland to Spain, and from Scotland to Sicily, his course has kindled the interest of the democracy of Europe.

He has, in every fibre, the nature of the people, and embodies their craving for a nobler future to be won by their innate energy. He has their strength and their weakness; their generous instincts and their incoherent doctrines; and his career, in which both have been signally exhibited, has awakened a motion of that spirit which runs through each State in Europe when revolution begins in one. He feels himself to belong not only to Italy, but to the cause of liberty through Europe. When he fought in the Republics of America, when he promises his sword to Hungary, or expresses his sympathy with the people in England or France, it is because he feels instinctively the brotherhood of people with people, and the bonds which unite their future destinies in one. Nor does he ever fail to show that he belongs little to the actual political systems, but to a new and possible order of things. To him the forms, constitutions, and ceremonials of the day are vanity and expedients. He

feels intensely with the heart of the nation, and believes it will rise into a higher life. His perfect simplicity of existence, his contempt for dignities, wealth, or power, his gentleness and guilelessness of heart belong indeed to a period when public life shall have risen to a purer atmosphere. That he does not understand it as it is, that he is ignorant of its tortuous mechanism, is more to his honour than to his discredit. He has left the task for which he has neither ability nor heart to others. He has gone back to his own simple world. He has left behind him the memory of an unsullied character, a sense of duty, and a love of truth, of which his age can see but half the worth and beauty.

But whilst Garibaldi retains the idea and habits of those with whom he has acted through life, his fine character enables him to see and avoid the errors which are peculiar to them. It is this instinct which has gathered up all his faculties with native sincerity round the standard of Savoy, and has made as the centre of his creed loyalty to King Victor Emmanuel. But this adherence to the king is very far from being with him a political dogma. It is nothing but an instinctive conception of the necessity of the case and the practical sense of a man of action. His whole mind, however, is essentially republican, and there is something preposterous in supposing that such a man can have any leaning towards monarchy as a system. But he loves and honours the soldier king in his heart, and he has idealised in him the national life. To this beautiful fiction in the mind of Garibaldi is perhaps due more than to any other single cause the welcome which the staunchest republicans have given to the once hated House of Savoy.

He, the man to whom peasant and prince appear each in their native worth as men, to whom all the

trappings of social life are contemptible, and the whole political system of which the monarchy is but the head is alien, to whom laws, tradition, or custom weigh nothing in the balance against the safety of the people and the honour of the nation, gives hearty allegiance to the king, in whom he sees personified the destinies of his country, and who is pointed out by fate as its natural dictator and chief. Under such an influence only could a nation in whom the bare notion of monarchy has never been fairly implanted, and in whom in this age no dogmas of a constitutional aristocracy are ever likely to implant it, receive with enthusiastic submission the monarch who was indispensable as a centre of union and of action. It was through this personal trust of Garibaldi that, in moments of great danger, fatal mistakes were avoided, when after the armistice of Villafranca, on the several proposed invasions of the Papal territories or the liberation of Sicily and Naples, it required the whole force of an influence like his to restrain the fiercest tempers and most earnest republicans collected round his standard from raising a separate standard, and at once commencing a career of insurrection.

It is this idea which forms the principal link between two very opposite parties—in a word, between the two distinct schools of policy of Italy—the constitutional and revolutionary. Nothing but a practical compromise in the person of a beloved leader could reconcile two parties who so thoroughly misunderstand and dislike each other. More than anything else, the example of Garibaldi has contributed to this end. At his word the most inveterate Republicans have consented to forego their principles, and the high sense of Cavour has not feared to use their indispensable services. It was the name of Garibaldi which finally decided the adhesion of the old party throughout Italy in 1859,

and has retained them true to their allegiance under the most trying circumstances. But it is no less clear that he is heart and soul with them. The revolutionary engine—the *levée en masse*—war carried on by insurrection — trust alone in native valour without discipline, organisation, or ceremony, is the only weapon which he knows. Diplomatic measures, foreign assistance, unless simply of volunteers, material equipment, and even military science are to him as irksome and worthless as golden trappings or braided uniforms. He appeals to the heart of the people alone, and trusts in their innate honour, energy, and heroism.

It is this which makes at once his strength and his weakness. He typifies and he evokes the life which alone can make a nation free or strong, but he discards at once all the institutions by which its strength is disciplined and directed. Himself and his followers feel in them no small measure of that unquenchable fire which in 1793 preserved and created France; they will not see how far the condition of their country and their countrymen is removed from that era of convulsive excitement. Yet no little of the religious zeal of those French Republicans may be seen in his army and in him. To him the cause and its defenders are alike sacred and dear. He can hardly understand that one who has laboured and suffered for Italy is unworthy of responsibility and confidence. In his eyes, one who has bled on the field or pined in a dungeon is a martyr to whom honour, influence, and trust are due without stint or hesitation. He who has endured the longest exile or the heaviest irons, or he who is most hateful to the common enemy, must of all men be most capable and worthy to serve the common country. He who has shown most his love for her must be best fitted to protect her. He who in

the darkest hour uttered the most inspiring protest is the truest guide in the hour of relief. Devotion must imply capacity, and unbounded faith is the best proof of a patriotic heart.

Such is the spirit in which the simple-hearted soldier clings to his old friends and their views, upholds Mazzini, Crispi, Mordini, Mario, and Cattaneo, and thrusts, as rulers, upon the bewildered Neapolitans and Sicilians men who have learnt their creed of politics and system of action in conspiracies, in exile, and in dungeons. With him they hold such a place as the "people of God" held in the heart of Cromwell. Those who have given all for the cause are sanctified in his eyes. He feels for them as members of a sort of religious brotherhood, of whose rectitude and zeal no doubt can be permitted. These are the spirits, as he believes, the country needs. It wants nothing but sincerity and vigour. They who love it most serve it best. The intrigues and artifices of professional politicians discredit and pervert the national honour. Compromises, arrangements, and prevarications belong to their trade. The moral sense is lowered by their specious precautions, and the keenness of self-reliance is blunted by their diplomacy. Innate energy and daring are nobler and surer weapons; the generous hearts of the people will do the rest. Brotherly affection and frank forbearance must soothe the antipathies of party. Unity of purpose and genuine zeal will preserve the public security and order. Generosity will supply the necessaries of life. Mutual trust must stand for discipline; the service of the country is above any earthly reward; its true leaders need no formal commissions or solemn election. Heroic valour supplies the place of armies, and simple manhood and its own great heart will create a nation worthy of freedom.

But whilst believing this in all sincerity and fervour, he is a slave to no system, and is not deluded by any narrow dogma. The same love for his country which he perceives in Mazzini, he recognises in Victor Emmanuel. He, too, and his soldiers and generals, have fought and laboured for the cause; and the very ministers and politicians and official servants of the State have, as he sees, after their fashion, a genuine sense of the common duty. Hence, throwing aside all logic, his fine instinct unites both parties in one. Full of loyalty to the king, he yet holds by all the friends of his old days; devoted to the principles of Mazzini, he submits to the will of the king and his ministers. Thus are two rival and hostile parties reunited and reconciled. The Garibaldians dare not repudiate a king whom their beloved chief delights to honour and obey. The monarchists are forced to be forbearing with a party to whose head they owe an incomparable service. The one have come to feel that from the ranks of the revolution has come forth the noblest son of Italy; the others, with their leader, can say, "We are Republicans still, but our republic is Victor Emmanuel."

This sense of duty to the king, in whom he sees personified the union and the honour of the country, at last, after many struggles, induced him to surrender the dictatorship of the South, in spite of his deepest convictions and an intense repugnance to the ministry of Cavour. Full of the purest ideas of the insurrectionary party, still smarting under the shameful sacrifice of Nice, and cherishing an inextinguishable hatred of Napoleon, Garibaldi was bent on retaining the power in South Italy, and rushing with blind heroism to the rescue of Venice and Rome. It needed the whole strength of his unalloyed trust in the king to restrain him from this fatal delirium. With many

struggles he recovered his reason ; his instinctive good sense returned. Almost heart-broken by the sacrifice, he gave up, in the presence of an overpowering sense of duty, all that he holds most dear and most true. He consented to look on upon the prolonged slavery of his brethren ; to yield to the will of a degrading oppressor ; to sacrifice his oldest friends and most trusted followers. And last trial of all, he consented to place the work of his own hands and the people he had fought for into the keeping of men to whom he bears the keenest antipathy, to whose policy his whole life is a protest, and who have but recently degraded the nation and bartered its very principle of life. Such was the temper in which the Dictator, much loth, accepted the annexation and its consequences.

It needed some overpowering sense of duty to counterbalance his ingrained convictions. Had he not acted so, it is plain that he was going on the road to ruin. Not only must his attack have been infallibly crushed in the field (even it would seem by the arms of Sardinia herself), but the internal state of the country would have shortly resulted in irredeemable chaos. It may indeed now be assumed that the Garibaldian régime would have ended in Naples in the most complete dissolution and anarchy, and almost the rupture of society itself. It needs little argument in the face of incontestable facts. Not indeed that the rulers appointed were in themselves incompetent or untrustworthy, but because they were wholly incompatible with the people whom they had to govern. Full of the notions of insurrection and revolution, they were applying their own extreme and incoherent system in a society quite unprepared for it, and to circumstances in which it was an anachronism. In a half-barbarous and debased population it was necessary not to inflame, but to calm ;

not to impel, but to restrain. They needed the strong hand of a regular and orderly Government, not the exciting stimulus of insurrectionary committees, and the whole apparatus of revolutionary action. Such a population could be controlled only by the accustomed weight of recognised Government. The Dictator was full of trust that they could be aroused to the due point of insurgent energy. But a blunder so fatal as this does not conclusively prove his incapacity for civil government under more favourable circumstances. It only shows that he had thoroughly mistaken the situation and the real necessities of the case, and was only able to shake himself free from the notions and habits of his whole previous life by an effort of the most splendid abnegation, and by withdrawing altogether and abruptly from a post the duties of which he profoundly misconceived.

The sacrifice of principle once made, the retirement to Caprera was a necessary and subordinate incident. Much has been said of this act by men who little understand his character. It was neither the result of mortification, or impulse, or vanity, much less of a morose or factious temper. With him to retire to his position as a simple yeoman was a natural consequence of no public task needing him. The self-sacrifice is seen in the surrender of his principles and friends, not in his love of the happiness of private life. Garibaldi, if not the leader of a revolution, is nothing. To head an army of heroes, to awaken the enthusiasm of a population, to initiate a new order of ideas and acts, is his only duty. To organise, to govern, and to compromise, to prepare by patient forethought, or devise by dexterous management, is above or below his power. He cannot make the laborious official, or the sagacious minister, or the rigid disciplinarian. His character is too lofty for the petty

necessities of these duties. He belongs wholly to a purer atmosphere. When no unusual effort is required, there is little in which he can serve his country. He retires in the calmer moments of ordinary life to the simplicity of the life of the humblest citizen. Yet natural and voluntary as his retirement has been, it is not the less melancholy. For a character of such strength the surrender of such hopes and purposes gives a profound shock. Though feeling the necessity of the case, he could scarcely comprehend all the reasons which made his mere presence a danger. Yet his retirement to his island is, perhaps, the most instructive, as it is certainly the most honourable act of his life. By it his party have learnt to yield, however reluctantly, to the true interests of their country ; and the name of an Italian has been placed before the eyes of Europe as the symbol of the purest self-devotion, and a religious sense of public duty.

Garibaldi thus gives to the national movement a character which was essential, and could come from no other. The creation of a nation needs more than victories, treaties, institutions, or administration. Success in the field or the council may furnish it with opportunities. True national life needs real public regeneration. It is right, then, that Garibaldi should be felt to be the popular hero. In a prolonged struggle, requiring so much from skill, circumstances, and foreign aid, it needed the contact of one great heart to keep alive the sense of dignity and honour. Whilst ministers were engaged in diplomacy, intrigue, or compromise (essential as they too were), it was well that a hero should be found to speak of nothing but truth and duty. Italian nationality means more than independence and freedom, or it means little. To show its true destiny, it needed one splendid

example of public duty without blemish or alloy. Henceforth for all Italians the memory of freedom is for ever bound up with the ideal of perfect social virtue. In years to come, in the strife of public life they may learn from him higher aims and nobler acts. Nor was it less essential that in a deadly struggle with a foreigner they should be headed by one who knows the true brotherhood of nations: and that a war of hatred should be tempered by one who has a woman's gentleness and mercy. Thus the Italian has fought without the brutalising hate of race; and no single instance of ferocity has stained his chivalry: for their chief loves all brave men, and can pity even the oppressor. Nor has this re-consecration of war brought back its barbarous traditions, or its retrograde instincts. He, who for the last time has made war noble in Europe, has cried aloud to it with almost fanatic aspiration for universal peace. The noblest soldier of our day tramples on the pomp and pride of war with native loathing and contempt. So, too, it was right that the popular heroism which lay burning beneath the action of state policy should have its due place and task. If all the power in this national struggle has gone to the great and noble, it was well that the true halo should rest round one who is of and with the people. In the midst of convulsion and strife, there rises up an image of mildness, simplicity, and tenderness, a gentle spirit calming passions, jealousies, and hatreds, disarming treachery, and putting selfishness to shame. Men have seen in his look the traditional image of goodness, and have not scrupled to call him the Apostle and Messiah of their race, as at once the deliverer from oppression and the teacher of a moral regeneration.

Of all the comparisons which have been made for him there are none which are not very wide of the

reality. He has, indeed, none of the qualities of statesman, dictator, or commander. That which belongs to him exclusively is a species of popular inspiration and influence as by electric contagion of emotions. More than to warriors or politicians he belongs to the order of religious enthusiasts. It is a character infusing itself through a nation. One story there is in history which in some moments recalls the features of his. One character there has been with whom his has some traits of likeness. Utterly unlike, as in many respects it is (and without instituting a purely fanciful comparison), there is something in the great Liberator of the spirit of the Maid of Orleans. Sprung like her from the depths of the people with whom he is identified in every fibre of his heart, he, too, in the extreme need of his country, has upraised it by an almost miraculous career. As in hers, the destinies of his country are bound up in his mind with the will of Providence, from whom deliverance is looked for by a faith truly religious. She, the simplest and purest of spirits, went forth from her peasant home rapt almost in a trance through her deep "pity for the realm of France," and intense belief in the greatness of her people, and carrying daring and devotion to the verge of fanaticism, awoke in the very depths of society the heart of the nation out of the midst of despair, until by the sheer strength of native worth, the overwrought people had vindicated for themselves their honour and salvation, in spite of every human obstacle, and in defiance of every recognised means or aid. A spirit not absolutely of another kind burns also in him. He, goaded almost to madness at the sight of his country's degradation, and called forth by the consciousness of a nobler destiny, has given up his every thought, act, and wish as to a sacred cause; and touching the inmost heart of his brothers, and calling

them round a king in whom the nation itself is idealised before his eyes, has led them on to incredible success, and inspired them with unconquerable faith. She who breathed life into France, her work once done, was a peasant girl again. So, too, the rock of Caprera lives in the hearts of millions of Italians as the emblem of perfect worth, of moral dignity, and of faith unwavering.

VI

AFGHANISTAN

(1879)

At the close of the second administration of Lord Beaconsfield, in December 1879, public opinion was deeply excited over the wanton invasion of Afghanistan and the continued Indian warfare instigated by the Viceroy as part of his policy of Imperial expansion. Mr. Gladstone and the leaders of the Liberal party were incessantly denouncing these adventures in speeches which led to the fall of the Government early in 1880.

I was at the time in close touch with them and in constant relations with Mr. John Morley, then editor of the Fortnightly Review. *I carefully studied the news of the Afghan war and the military occupation of Kabul, seeing all telegrams published in India or at home. The system of secrecy by means of the "military censorship" was not then organised so strictly as it has been in our later wars.*

Besides this, I was in daily communication with the late Lord Hobhouse and the late Sir Henry Norman, and other old soldiers and officials, who voluntarily supplied me with information not known outside the India Office, and with private letters written home by officers in active service. I received a long correspondence from Lord Lytton himself, and I saw letters from a former Viceroy, besides others from officers in the front who were unknown to me and to whom I was unknown.

By these means I was in possession of a body of exact and authoritative details as to all that took place. The attempts made by officials in India to trace my means of information signally failed, because the writers of the confidential letters shown me did not even know my name. With the support of the editor and of his political friends, I wrote two articles in the Fortnightly Review, *December 1879 and March 1880 (Nos. 156, 159), using the mass of special knowledge I possessed. The first of these was reprinted as a pamphlet, and was circulated widely by one of the Liberal Associations at their cost. Attempts were made to dispute some of my statements of fact; but I never saw any replies which were not either irrelevant or false—"as false as a bulletin."*

I now re-issue the more general and permanent parts of the first of these articles. I reserve for the future the special details of the incidents of the war; but, as I still hold my papers and many letters from eminent persons, I can substantiate all that I state when the time comes. It is fortunate that our relations with Afghanistan are now friendly and permanent, so that no indiscretions can be charged in returning to a history nearly thirty years old.

The general principles of international morality and of justice herein maintained are just as important as ever, and are quite as much in danger of being violated. Indeed, the same crimes and follies have been continually committed, and by both political parties alternately, in the long series of Asian and African wars of the last thirty years—down to the most recent of all—the idiotic campaign in Tibet (1908).

"*A superior race is bound to observe the highest current morality of the time in all its dealings with the subject race.*"—JOHN MORLEY.

BY what title are we treating the Afghan people as rebels? By what law are our generals hanging men

on charges of leading the enemy's forces to battle? Whence comes our right to kill priests who incite their people to resist us? That our armies have invaded Afghanistan, and in two expeditions have crushed the soldiers from Kabul, we all know. That we have broken up what shadow of state existed; that we have its titular ruler a prisoner; that we have seized his treasures, and destroyed the centre of his capital—all this is very true. It is what invaders and conquerors usually do, or at least have done in former ages. But having done all this, by what right, in public law or in moral justice, do we now affect to treat the conquered people as rebels, and hang the generals and the priests who led them to defend their country?

We well know what is the official plea for these acts. It was not unskilfully concocted. It is this. Down to last August we had on our North-Western frontier in India, it was said, a strong, friendly, and independent kingdom. We had lately entered on closer terms of amity with this friendly nation, and had covered its sovereign with personal favours. We had an envoy and a brilliant suite in his capital. Suddenly a faction in his army mutiny; they overpower our friendly prince; they attack our embassy, and kill our envoy and his escort. The prince for the moment is unable to restore order; we go to assist him; he even invites us. We enter his kingdom to assist in maintaining the police. A few murderers and robbers still trouble the security of his capital. We must assist our friend to overcome his rebels and mutineers at home.

So far the official plea runs smoothly enough. But in the face of the facts we know, it has grown too unreal to be stated with gravity. Our expedition to restore order in the midst of a mutiny becomes an

army of invasion and conquest. India heaves with the effort. The North-West is denuded of its troops; swept of its baggage animals, its supplies, and its material. Millions and millions are poured out with an almost desperate eagerness to win. As the invading army advances, it finds that a war is before it at least as formidable as the former war of conquest. The mutineers prove to be the regular troops of Kabul; they fight battles with obstinacy; they do all that a half-armed and semi-civilised race of mountaineers can do to defend their homes and their freedom. Our armies advance with skill and rapidity; the resistance is crushed out in a series of battles, bloody enough to the defeated, and certainly spoken of as victories at home. The capital is occupied with all the formalities of a conquered city; and the people are dealt with as national enemies. It turns out that in all probability the friendly prince was himself the author of the attack; that he must be kept a prisoner, and no doubt will be tried for his life; his property is seized, his palace destroyed, and his titular kingdom is treated as a thing of the past. The occupied country is dealt with as a conquered province; and an outcry is raised from our soldiers to annex it without more ado.

It seemed good last year to the British Government to invade a neighbouring independent people. That people was a group of rude tribes hardly formed into a state, fiercely fanatical in religion, and proud of their freedom and independence. After laying heavy burdens on suffering India, our armies succeeded in crushing the national defence, in driving the sovereign into exile and death, in destroying what cohesion had previously existed in his name. A period of confusion followed, the kingdom dissolved into separate and unsettled groups, and the tribes and chiefs made the most of their new independence. Some partial attempt

at resettlement followed. A son of the dead sovereign, just released from a long imprisonment, succeeded in securing some show of authority in the capital, and in some other parts of the country. It was convenient to treat him as the ruler, and we partly enabled him to become so in fact. The late envoy forced on the bewildered prince such terms as it suited us to dictate, and with fair words a nominal peace was effected.

But all who knew Afghanistan warned us that the treaty was a piece of paper, that the prince had no real power to execute the treaty, even if he had the will, that a large portion of the country repudiated him, that the leading spirits of the people regarded him as a traitor, a puppet, and a coward. If ever warning was justified by events it was that which all the cooler heads foretold when they said that to make your puppet sign an ignominious treaty was not to conquer a country, and to send a small force to hector over the puppet in his mountain capital was a wild and foolhardy scheme. However, it was done. Into the midst of a turmoil of fierce tribes, smarting under defeat, furious with religious hatred, and torn by intrigues and dissensions, the so-called envoy was sent to enforce the terms of a so-called treaty which the tribes had in no way accepted, to dictate to a sovereign who was hardly obeyed by his own bodyguard, and scarcely secure in his own capital. Almost the one thing that Afghans and their chiefs for generations had agreed in was to resist the presence of British soldiers and officials. And here, by virtue of a treaty which these chiefs repudiated, signed by a prince whom many of them did not acknowledge, a small British force entered the capital, headed by the soldier who last year sought almost to force the Khyber Pass, and who this year had personally dictated the treaty. It was almost to invite an outrage, to make a collision inevitable.

What else could we have done if we wished an excuse for a new war?

But this peaceful ambassador was only an ambassador in name. He came at the head of a squadron. The so-called suite of this so-called envoy consisted of a small military force of about sixty or seventy picked soldiers. It is true they were not strong enough for an army; but they were much too strong for an embassy. It was not quite a corps of occupation, nor quite a corps of observation, and they came in what was at least a military truce. But they practically served the purpose of an army of occupation and of a corps of observation; and they visibly represented an ample army in reserve. When we know what feats have been done by British soldiers in the midst of barbarous races, it was only a little in excess of the ordinary odds. They were not there exactly to fight —they were there to overawe and to control. The time was not precisely war; but it was little more than a truce.

The small corps came into Kabul much as the famous uhlan in 1870 rode into a French town. He too did not come to fight; he came to overawe the citizens into carrying out his orders. The Red Prince was never far behind; and in the meantime the uhlan took military occupation of the city, and the practical control of the citizens. But the uhlan took his chance of being shot. The position of Sir L. Cavagnari was not exactly this. But it was not very far from it. He had gone into the midst of a turbulent enemy, in advance of the regular army. He held a nominal political office, and he came under the terms of a so-called treaty. But he came, as he well knew, with his life in his hand. I shall say nothing to dishonour the memory of a brave, but wild man. He thought that audacity might supply the

place of troops ; he believed that his death, if he died, would be heroic. He has died as a brave soldier dies, at the head of his men, fighting against overwhelming odds with a half-barbarous enemy, whom he meant to conquer and whom he thought to overawe. But he has died, as a soldier dies, in what was virtually an act of war.

This so-called envoy was in truth a soldier sent out on an advanced post, into a country seething with civil war, from which the invading armies had scarcely withdrawn, under a treaty signed by a mere unrecognised pretender. He is sent into a city which admits no other European on any pretence ; where, as Lord Lawrence used to say, no European's life is safe for an hour, and where no Ameer could protect him ; amongst wild mountaineers and fanatical Moslems, who regard the presence of an Englishman as a personal humiliation. He was sent out with a small force really to secure the advantages of a war, which all sensible men said was far from ended. To treat the death of this soldier, ordered out on a forlorn hope like this, as the murder of an ambassador to a civilised power, to be avenged with all the punctilio of European diplomacy, is mere chicanery. And upon this chicanery is built up the claim to punish the last efforts of Afghan self-defence as mutiny, rebellion, and murder.

Even this chicanery itself is not consistently maintained. The legitimate mode of redressing the slaughter of an envoy is to make war upon the State, to coerce its government, and to obtain satisfaction. But war with a State, however great the provocation, gives no right to hang generals and priests, who head the national resistance. If, in the very act of war, the State is reduced to atoms, and its government shattered or dissolved, that may give a right to the injured power to punish the actual offenders itself,

and to set up a government of its own. But what we now complain of is, not the punishment of the men who committed the outrage, or fair attempts to restore a government, but the hanging of generals and priests whose crime is to have animated a national defence, the proclaiming that all who resist the British invader shall be treated as rebels, and the setting rewards upon their heads. For this there is no justification whatever in public law, in morality, or even decency.

Against whom are these men rebels? You have seized their ruler as a prisoner: from the first he was practically a hostage. You are about to try him for his life on the charge that he instigated or approved of the attack. How came the Afghan soldiers at Charasiab to be mutineers? They fought as regular regiments under their own native officers, and to all appearances at the secret orders of their nominal prince. Where is the government that they defy? There is no government, or shadow of government, except the British army, and the late government which is now its prisoner. And the British army are plainly invaders who have deposed two sovereigns and destroyed two governments. Are the men you hang the authors of the attack on the embassy? Where are the proofs of it? What is the evidence that satisfies a court-martial, on fire with military vengeance; smarting under a bitter catastrophe, and the cruel death of brave comrades? What is the law you use in your drum-head commissions, whence issue no reports that you do not countersign, where is no independent or civilian witness? The men whom you hang, you pretend, have abetted the outrages *after the fact*, by resisting the invaders of their country, by taking arms against the British forces.

By this military indictment, every soldier in the

Afghan armies supports the rebels; rebels are those who abet the mutineers; mutineers are those who resist the British; and those who resist the British are guilty (after the fact) of murder of the British envoy. Mutiny, rebellion, outlawry, murder, on your lips are nothing but random phrases, tossed together by soldiers, parading the terms of law and justice; who really come to conquer a brave, but turbulent race; who mean to kill all who oppose them, and to terrify the rest into the show of submission. The pretexts that justify this unsoldierlike slaughter of prisoners of war are chicanery, worthy of Scroggs and Jeffreys. And the putting men to death by legal chicanery bears an ugly name in English history. The meaning of it, that which justifies it in the eyes of soldiers, and probably of some politicians, is this—that since the difficulties of subduing Afghanistan permanently are very great, and the forces that are sent to do it are very small, and since Kabul is in the heart of Asia away from all European observation, and veiled by the "military censure," recourse must be had to terrorism.

It would be better to give up this affectation of legality, and, if it is necessary to herald a war of conquest with proclamations in the style of Oriental Caliphs, to open thus:—"Be it known to all men in Europe, Asia, and Africa, in the name of the Empress of India, and so forth. Whereas, for sufficient reasons, we have determined to subdue the people of Afghanistan, we hereby warn you not to resist our victorious armies. If you oppose our good pleasure, we shall hang some of you, until the others obey and submit. Such part of the city as we think fit we shall destroy, and it is only in mercy that we do not destroy it entirely. We shall kill and burn until the people come to know that our will is irresistible. *Imperium et Libertas.* Rule, Britannia!"

I am not making any general charge of cruelty against our soldiers and generals. We have no evidence that they acted in the thirst for blood, nor in any lust of outrage. Fortunately things are not so bad as that. English gentlemen are not suddenly converted into Mouravieffs, Gallifets, and Chefket Pashas. Nor do I assert that they acted worse than soldiers always act who are left to themselves and permitted to hang civilians. Their moderation in hanging contrasts favourably with that of Russian or Turkish generals suppressing an insurrection. My charge is a perfectly definite one. It is that they are permitted to hang people at all as rebels; that they should be suffered to set rewards on the heads of soldiers and generals who meet them in open battle; that they should be allowed to execute prisoners in cold blood (short of any case of specific murder proved against the criminal); that they have power by proclamation to convert the national defence of a free people into rebellion and mutiny; that they should be left to be the sole judges of what constituted this offence. Lastly, my complaint is that British officers sent to invade and conquer an independent people should be authorised to do so by terrorism—by the use, that is, not of their swords and rifles in battle, but by the rope and the torch when no one is left to fight.

To all this the one defence is, as always — the prestige of our Indian Empire, the extreme paucity of our forces in Asia. They say, The troops we can spare to hold vast territories are so few, the importance of our Eastern Empire is so enormous, the difficulties of subduing vast mountain tracts with two or three thousand Europeans are so great that we cannot be bound by European law, that we can only exist—by terrorism in fact. Now to say that it is impossible

to apply the public law of Europe in the East is no answer at all. Our very charge is, that they do apply the forms and fictions of European law, whenever it suits them, and just so far as it suits them, and throw these forms off the moment they tell on the wrong side. In dealing with Oriental races, it has become a settled practice with some British Governments to assert and exact all the rights that can be grasped under the strict letter of European diplomacy, and to recognise none of the obligations and limits of European law, whenever they cease to be convenient.

The dilemma is this. If they go to Kabul under the rights of public law, they are acting there in defiance of public law. If they deny that public law can be applied to Afghans, how ludicrous is the plea of the sacred person of our envoy, the mutiny against a friendly prince, the constructive rebellion, and the *ex post facto* murders? The public law of Europe is, perhaps, in all its forms, or in all its rules, not capable of strict application in Asia. But to a civilised and honourable people that cannot mean that they are exempt from all law in Asia, from the spirit and principle of public law as well as from its forms; that cannot justify them in using the terms of public law in order to entrap and mystify Asiatic rulers, and then to laugh at the very essence of public law, if it hinders their own objects. To a great people at the head of modern civilisation, the difficulties of applying the public law of Europe to people in Asia involve most scrupulous care to follow that which is beyond and behind all public law in Europe, a real and healthy sense of equity, to look at the things as they are, to treat half-civilised races of different religion and habits, from the point of view of a wise understanding of their prejudices and their ignorances, to bear ourselves always as their guides in civilisation and justice.

Now throughout this Afghan war (it is not the first nor the last war that has been waged by England on that plan) it is laid down on system that our troops are to enter the enemies' country, whether they be independent tribes, rebels, mutineers, or robbers is immaterial; in any case the country is treated as in "insurrection" and general outlawry; and, as the troops are too few to occupy and permanently hold so vast an area, they are to kill and burn, ravage and destroy so far as may be requisite to secure submission. They are to behave just as Edward I. behaved when he was conquering Wales or invading Scotland, just as Cæsar behaved in Gaul, or Cortes in Mexico. That is to say, they are to hold themselves free from all the laws of war as understood in modern Europe; they are not bound to fight as civilised nations fight; if they are too few to subdue the country physically, they must terrorise it into submission; the end is conquest, and any means leading to that end are good.

Now I say that no circumstances, no diplomatic outrages, no pieces of paper or treaties with mountain chiefs, can justify this system of conquest by terrorism. The spirit of evil is on it, everywhere and always; in Asia, or in Europe, in the mountains of Afghanistan, or in the valleys of the Balkans. If your troops are too few to conquer and hold a territory, by the public laws of peace and of war, you should keep out of it; if the tribes you wish to annex do not understand modern diplomacy, it is no ground that you should sink to the morality of a hill chief. To tell us that the interests of India are paramount, and that to save our power and our credit there, all things are permitted, and that all morality is idle; this is indeed to demoralise the nation, to turn our Indian Empire into a curse greater to Englishmen than her Mexican

and Peruvian conquests were to Spain; it is to teach a free people the creed of the pirate. Let the old watchwords be erased from all English flags: *Dieu et mon Droit*—*Honi soit*—and the rest, are stale enough. We will have a new imperial standard for the new Empress of Asia, and emblazon on it—*Imperium et Barbaries.*

It concerns the honour of this people, it especially concerns the credit of Parliament, that the political and international side of these foreign wars should not be resigned *carte blanche* to soldiers with a roving commission to conquer, free from all reference to the law of nations, and practically exempt from the rules of war. Above all, it is monstrous that they should be permitted to draw round them a strict cordon of secrecy, and exclude all information of an independent or civilian kind, even to the civilian government they serve. It is an idle pretence that the secrecy was demanded in the military interests of the campaign. It was enforced to exclude criticism, to avoid observation, to withdraw the acts of the generals from the control of the civil government, of the Parliament, of the nation.

No doubt generals in the field delight in nothing so much as in *carte blanche*, the exclusion of all political control, the suppression of all criticism, the absorption of every force civil, political, legal, and moral into the one convenient autocracy—Martial Law as understood at headquarters. Of course these heady captains, with the thirst of Alexander and Napoleon in their veins, would be only too happy to conquer all Asia on such terms, and career over the planet so long as at home we found them in men and in guns, and asked no awkward questions. But it behoves a responsible government and a free Parliament to beware that these men never shall be let

loose on a province or a nation, to drag the name of England through blood and dust, to shut themselves up in a sealed district on some idle military excuse, and then to set to work with fire and sword, gun and halter, until they have tamed another semi-civilised and independent people. Such things may cause joy in military clubs, and their admirers; it may delight those who believe that England can civilise the East by force; but it is utterly dishonouring to a nation such as England, and it disgusts and shames the manly spirit of our thoughtful working people.

Again I say, I do not charge our soldiers and generals with promiscuous cruelty. Very far from it. I know and honour amongst them many most gentle and generous men. They often show conspicuous self-control, and a quiet mercifulness worthy of truly brave natures. They almost never lose their heads, and seldom indeed do they catch a blood lust like French or Turkish generals in an insurrection. Personally at home we all know them as English gentlemen and just men. But I complain that they are often set to tasks such as no soldier should have given to him, and granted a licence such as should be trusted to no general. One could not trust the archangel Michael to be just, or the seraph Abdiel to be faithful, in a position so trying.

Our soldiers are sent into a district, one against a thousand or ten thousand, usually heated with some tale of outrage to avenge, and knowing that nothing but desperate energy can enable them to win, despising their enemy as "niggers," and utterly unable to look on them as soldiers; they are sent into a province or a kingdom alone, without any political control or civilian witness, and they are simply ordered to chastise the rebels, or crush the resistance. What

would have been the consequences had the Red Prince been let loose upon France without any civil control or witness, with orders *carte blanche* to bring Frenchmen to their senses, and to be his own Vattel and Foreign Secretary? Prince Bismarck took care to keep his generals within bounds. Had he not done so, Europe would be ringing now with horror. What then must it be when soldiers, on fire to avenge some outrage, outnumbered as the Spaniards were outnumbered in Mexico, are sent in upon a "nigger" people, with all the physical loathing of race, and the inhuman prompting of their religion, to tame an insurgent tribe? Angels could not be trusted to do the horrid work, and the natural result ensues.

In spite of the conspicuous coolness and generosity of our soldiers, the fact remains that they never meet their equals or a civilised foe. A generation has passed since Englishmen met in fight white men, and even those were hardly of European civilisation. They never fight under the rules and conditions of modern war. They hardly ever fight with a foe, whom they treat as an honourable foreign enemy. They are for ever engaging in battues of black skins, red skins, brown skins, "niggers," or savages of some kind. Their enemies are almost always "rebels," or "mutineers," or "insurgents," or "marauders," with whom they do not pretend to hold the conventional laws of warfare. Our officers, therefore, are almost always partly executioners, and partly criminal police, as well as soldiers. They not only use their swords, but they have ever in their train ropes and halters, gibbets and cats, and all the apparatus of a Russian army in Poland. They seldom fight without killing prisoners in cold blood after all resistance has ceased. They blow them from guns by platoons, they hang them from the first tree, they shoot them in squads,

they flog them by scores, they burn villages wholesale; they hold drum-head courts-martial on priests and officials; they proclaim martial law at their own free-will.[1]

Again I repeat that I do not charge our officers or men with wanton cruelty, nor do I say that they become personally savage, except in rare cases. Nor do I say that they do these things without general orders, or without a very fair show of actual insurrection and real outrage. But this, as a fact, is the horrid work the British army is usually called on to do when it enters the field. It is one of the curses, no doubt, of our Empire; one of the burdens to be borne by a nation which builds its greatness on vast continents of half-civilised people. I wonder that the fine stuff of English gentlemen can resist, as it does, the contagion. I am amazed that so few of them get brutalised by their work. There were men, we know, in Jamaica who seemed to delight in hanging and flogging the blacks. And I myself have heard a young officer say that what pulled him through a desperate wound in the Indian "Mutiny" was the crawling to the window each morning to see the niggers hung—the "niggers" being prisoners taken in the battle where he got his wound.

But not the less necessary is it, for a civilised government and people, to control with a strong hand the appeal to military law. There is that of the wild beast in all fighting men heated with battle, that they ought almost never to be turned, with the blood still hot upon their hands, into governors, executioners, judges. This Martial Law is a big word for a black thing. It means terrorism, slaughter,

[1] Much of this has been repeated *mutatis mutandis* in our various African wars, where again we were fighting against raw levies and native races. See the Essay on *Martial Law* (1908).

violence—within such limits as a soldier thinks convenient. It is strange that of all nations on the earth, except possibly the Russian, the English nation is the one which most often proclaims Martial Law. The British army, of all armies in the world, is the one which is most often hanging, shooting, or punishing prisoners of war. And of all civil Governments on earth, unless, perhaps, that of the Czar, the Parliament of this free nation is the one which is the readiest to hand over countries and provinces to the absolute will of a soldier flushed with victory.

If these words, quite undeniable as they are, cause pain and anger in the minds of honest men, the fault is not mine. I do not pretend to be a man of peace at any price, nor do I deny the necessity for soldiers and the duty of recognising war. But I have a right to appeal to the civilian sentiments of civilised citizens, and to ask that our army shall be held strictly in civil control and consistently used in a civilised spirit. No honourable soldier can refuse such a claim. As to the men of blood and of swagger, we care as little for their wrath as for their insolence. They cannot rise, as a French statesman said, to the level of our disdain. Men who fulfil their civil duties in the face of any opposition, need not be dismayed by the courage which hurries back to banquets, balls, and welcomes, from the slaughter of "niggers," from wild raids across savage districts in expeditions which, like a tiger-hunt, combine at once a battue and a picnic. Such men entirely mistake the true temper of their fellow-citizens at home. The opinion of the profession or the narrow class that feeds it is not all in this island. There are serious men here, quite as eager for the honour of their country as they are, who have thought about war, its history, its duties, and trials as much as they have, who turn with

a sick heart from this never-ending tale of invasion, slaughter, repression, military executions, and martial law.

For a generation the Temple of Janus for us has hardly once been closed. No year passes that British troops are not fighting somewhere, and never a white or a civilised foe, and rarely indeed in civilised warfare. To us these men come home, yet honourable men no doubt, and unpolluted with savagery, but still reeking with the blood of men killed in unjust quarrels, of men put to death in cold blood, butchered in the loose hubbub of military retribution. Will some member of Parliament exact a true return of the prisoners taken in battle in these African and Asian wars, and of the punishments inflicted by military justice? How many of the hundreds of thousands of fighting men who have so lately met our armies in battle, have been taken prisoners in the field? How many of such prisoners have been honourably treated as Europeans treat European prisoners of war? What are these wars in which we never hear of prisoners, in which prisoners of war are systematically tried by courts-martial? Have we no member on either side of our docile parties, who will tear open the secrets of the "military censor," and drag before the nation the true story of this hanging of "niggers"?

There are men at home to whom these things are never gilded by displays of personal daring, who hear the groans of the prisoners in their agony amidst all the cheers of admiring friends. The vast mass of our working people, in town and in country, loathe these criminal wars, and turn from the instruments of these wild acts of retribution. *Bella geri placuit, nullos habitura triumphos*, said the noble Roman—there are wars too odious to deserve a triumph. Our soldiers too often forget this maxim, and the stern warning it

conveys. There is no response in the mass of the nation to the thoughtless cheers of the idle, when executioners and hangmen return to claim a triumph. They may have done their duty, and may have done it without passion : but we do not care to see them ; and we ask of the Government that sent them by what law or right these things were done.

To all that is said there is always one monotonous reply—the prestige of our Asiatic position—the critical necessities of our Indian Empire. If this means, that having a great possession in the East, its importance is such that neither justice nor morality has anything to do with the matter, then this nation will sink to the Spain of the Philips, if it ever accepts such a doctrine. I know there are politicians on both sides who have quietly made up their minds, that having got India they mean to keep it by any means and all means which come to hand ; and whatever has to be paid in life, or in waste, in guilt, or in shame, will be paid to the bitter end. To such men we have but one short answer—we do not argue with Pirates : we call upon civilised mankind to judge them.

It is just because we have a deep sense of all that we ought to do in India, it is just for the sake of India itself, that we condemn this military terrorism. It is not we who say—Perish India, or who crudely call out for its summary abandonment. For my part, I recognise all the duties which our presence there has imposed on us, and I desire to fulfil those duties of good government and upright dealing at every sacrifice and with all our might. It is because I desire a just rule and the firm and peaceful settlement of India, such as may lead to the ultimate establishment of real native governments, that I protest against the system of these constant wars of retribution. How is the government of India ever to rise to the level of a

just and beneficent power, or to educate its people to govern themselves, when, year after year, it is occupied in successive wars of aggression and repression, of terrorism or vengeance? How are officers to become the peaceful guardians of a contented empire, when they are for ever returning, hot with revenge and triumph, from a promiscuous battue of half-barbarous "rebels"?

The day when the white and the dark race shall feel that they are fellow-citizens, instead of conquerors and conquered, masters and subjects, is indeed indefinitely adjourned by these wild raids amongst wild tribes in the spirit of Cortes or Pizarro. The bad blood which these raids enkindle in every vein, the desperate sense of race-feud which they breed in the native, and the fierce temper of disdain which they rouse in us—these are the real perils and difficulties of the Indian Empire. Fed by this slaughter and violence and lawlessness, that empire will always be precarious, will always be sinking to a lower level. To believe that an empire can for ever subsist on terrorism, be the terrorism only in reserve, is to believe that the most cynical of Turkish Pashas or Russian Prefects are wise politicians and true patriots.

If we are asked what do we mean by *terrorism*, the question is easily answered. Terrorism consists in the killing, torturing, or punishing A, not for any crime committed by A, but in order to terrify B, C, and D into submitting to your will. That is terrorism; and it is, always and everywhere, evil and abominable, in Europe or in Asia. No circumstances can justify it. No object can excuse it. And that is what, we say, our troops have done in Kabul, and what our Government has authorised them to do. If it be objected that all war is terrorism, the answer again is simple. War has its recognised laws as much as

peace, and they must be submitted to in Asia as much as in Europe. If it be said that they cannot be applied in Asia, or are not understood by barbarians, then the spirit of these laws must be followed, if we cannot follow their letter. They are laws like the laws of honour which bind soldiers as such, which distinguish them from pirates, banditti, and cut-throats, wherever they may fight. They are laws which ought to bind the British soldier as a part of his own self-respect, quite apart from their being enforced by adverse opinion, or formulated in words by the enemy. And the chief and centre of these laws are these:—Thou shalt not kill helpless prisoners of war; thou shalt not kill for civil offences, as distinct from military attack. Both are summed up in this. You may use your swords and your rifles in battle—you may not use gibbets and ropes in cold blood. And we tell these heroes of the drum-head and the halter that, whether it be in Asia or in Europe, in Africa or in America, they who do these things cease to be soldiers, and sink to the level of hangmen or cut-throats. Longitude and latitude have nothing to do with it: nor have the habits and ideas of the particular enemy. It is a matter of personal self-respect, binding on gentlemen and on soldiers everywhere.

VII

THE ANTI-AGGRESSION LEAGUE

I

Before the second ministry of Mr. Gladstone had been in power for two years, a movement was started to check the continuance of the aggressive policy abroad which it was hoped the Mid-Lothian campaign had suppressed. It originated with Mr. Herbert Spencer, the late Lord Hobhouse, and many Members of Parliament, journalists, and political speakers who were dissatisfied with the Zulu and Transvaal wars, the Borneo annexation, and other expeditions. After many private meetings, a public conference took place in February 1882, at which Mr. John Morley presided, the speakers being himself, Mr. Herbert Spencer, Lord Hobhouse, several Liberal M.P.'s, and myself. Some twenty Members were present, including three who have been Cabinet Ministers in the present Administration. A full account of the speeches and of the policy of the League was published in March 1882, entitled Anti-Aggression League Pamphlets, No. 1. *It gave the names of some thirty-six Members and upwards of forty Professors, writers, and politicians as forming the General Council.*

From this Pamphlet I extract a few sentences of the speech I made at the Conference (1908).

The vast increase of the Empire in Asia and in Africa has been effected almost entirely by war. If we

count up the years since 1832, and set against each year the wars in which we had been engaged, we should find there were more wars than there were years; that is, if now and then a year might be found free from war, the next gave us two, three, and even four wars for one year. If we take a period of fifty years, we shall find that in at least ten of these years we have been engaged in warlike expeditions in Africa; during ten of them we have been engaged in war with China. During eight of these years we have had wars with the Afghans; during ten years we were occupied with wars in India; during four or five in New Zealand; and during as many more in Burmah, Japan, Persia, or Malayland. During fifty years I reckon that England has been engaged in more than forty distinct wars, without counting either the Crimean war or the constant sputtering of war with the Indian hill tribes.

Between 1850 and 1860 we were engaged in almost incessant war in every part of Asia, from the Black Sea to the Yellow Sea. The fact is that England is very rarely at peace, and has more wars than any other nation in Europe, not even excepting Russia. If we study the list of years of war, we see a very significant fact: there *are* some years in which these Asiatic, African, and Colonial wars seem suddenly to lull. They ceased during the three years of the great Crimean war; they ceased after the great European revolutions of 1848 and 1849; they ceased during the great German war in 1866; and they ceased again during and after the great war in France of 1870-1871. During periods of great danger or watchfulness at home, they cease. That proves they are under our own control. We can abstain from them when our safety and policy demand it. The word is passed to our prancing pro-consuls

and bold ambassadors in Asia and in Africa that they must be quiet at their peril, and immediately peace reigns on all our remote frontiers !

In old Rome there was the ancient Temple of Janus, with its gate open in time of war, and closed only in time of peace. I sometimes wish that we too had our Temple of Janus in Palace Yard, so that our senators, as they go down to take their places, might see the gate so continuously open, and might remember that we were still at war.

Something more is needed to check war than the questions or remonstrances of independent Members of Parliament. They tell us how much they need support from without. And our movement just offers such support. It proposes a union of men of affairs with men who address opinion through the press, or by books, or by the pulpit. A persistent tendency to war, aggression, and commercial adventure can only be held in check by a systematic effort to maintain peace and international justice. The criticisms of politicians require behind them an organic and constructive theory of a policy fitted for an industrial and civilised age. We need a matured system of international morality — a practical scheme for an effective policy of Peace.

Such we make bold to think may be found in the printed papers and programmes of the intended League, which will bring together men of influence in the House and the country alongside of men like our Chairman and Mr. Herbert Spencer, who in their works have elaborated and illustrated the doctrines from the point of view of social philosophy. We contemplate no abstract Doctrine of Peace ; no specific cut-and-dried scheme of constitutional change ; no arbitrary limitation of the Executive. We seek to make the Executive conscious of its responsibility

to public opinion; not to impose chains on it in the exercise of its duty, but to make it feel that it will be judged according to its deserts. Nor are we hostile to the present Government. Our movement counts many of the warmest friends of it. But if we find men like Mr. Gladstone, Lord Granville, and Lord Hartington, so continually overpowered by the self-will of officials, or the interests of certain classes, we think they need help to enable them to maintain a policy of peace and justice. Had they had it, they might have found it easier to withdraw from the Transvaal and from Afghanistan, when they knew it was their duty to do so.

II

The new League was hardly constituted when in the summer of 1882 our entanglements in Egypt threatened to involve us in a new war with practical annexation. The League appealed to public opinion, and especially to the working class, to prevent such a catastrophe. A great meeting was held in the Memorial Hall on June 26, at which I was asked to give an address to specially invited representatives of Trades Union and Labour Associations. It was published as Anti-Aggression League Pamphlets, No. 2.

From this report I extract the following passages:—

When, two years ago, the great appeal to the nation was made, we thought it was decided for ever that England should renounce the policy of injustice, and cease to undertake the control of half the human race in the name of civilisation in general and Great

Britain in particular. We were all, perhaps, a little too confident that the policy we rejected was really abandoned. Mr. Gladstone, and almost every member of his Ministry, and his supporters in the House, were pledged up to the eyes to repudiate it. But the authors and agents of the system remained. In a country like ours, with world-wide commercial interests, with an Empire that is scattered over the planet as no empire in history ever was, with traditions of conquest and domination, founded by war and maintained by enterprise, it was inevitable that the classes who had created and worked the system should struggle to maintain it.

The zealous governors and fiery consuls, pushed on by the resident traders seeking new markets, the viceroys and envoys, and ambassadors, trained to dictate to kings, and to extend the Empire by policy or force, the adventurous spirits who form an irregular band of pioneers in advance of the limits of the Empire, the permanent foreign and colonial staff, all made it difficult for Mr. Gladstone and his party to carry out the pledges they had given. It needed incessant remonstrances from the Press and the people before Afghanistan, Kabul, and Candahar were finally got rid of; the shameful war with the Basutos in Africa was still suffered to drag on; the author of the Zulu war —Sir Bartle Frere—was not immediately recalled; the unjust imprisonment of the Zulu king was still enforced; the unjust annexation of the Transvaal country was still maintained, till it ended in a shameful and iniquitous war.

The League, whose objects I am to present to you to-night, is far from designing any opposition to the Ministry of Mr. Gladstone, or any wish to embarrass it. We are most of us steady supporters of the Liberal party, and no man could more heartily desire

than I did myself the great change in policy which brought Mr. Gladstone to power. And, with his work in Ireland and in the reform of our Parliamentary system still incomplete, no man could more honestly than I regard his fall as a national calamity. We are not acting, I say, with any desire whatever to embarrass the Government. We are seeking only to remind them of their principles. People do not always like to be reminded of their principles; but it is good for them—it is always good for them—and they very soon find out that those who do so are their best friends.

Now, what are the principles of the Anti-Aggression League? Well, they are the principles of the Mid-Lothian campaign, of the Government of Mr. Gladstone: the principles that the nation ratified in May 1880. That is to say, that this policy of extending the Empire, aggrandising the power of Britain, thrusting ourselves as managers and masters of our weaker neighbours, backing up our adventurous people in every enterprise, just or unjust, bullying the weak tribes, making petty kings our vassals, opening markets by gunboats, and maintaining controllers by ironclads—this system must cease, once for all. The Empire is a great deal too big and scattered and composite in itself to need any increase. He is the worst enemy of our country who seeks to make it wider and more difficult to defend. We have already more nations to manage and govern than we can succeed in governing well, and some very much nearer home than Africa. The adventures of our traders, whether in China or Japan, or South Africa or North Africa, or Australia, or the Pacific Islands, are often of a kind that cover us with shame as a nation, and add nothing but sorrow and trouble to our Governments.

England, in spite of all our professions, is that

country which, of all others, has the oftenest war on its hands, and is the oftenest engaged in crushing the efforts of some weaker people for independence. The German Empire, under Bismarck, is a model of a peaceable nation compared to England ; Russia herself has not so many wars, and all the military monarchies of the world put together are not so frequently engaged in fighting as our little island, shut off from the warlike people of Europe by the "silver streak." In fifty years we have been engaged in at least fifty wars, and a year hardly ever passes without military operations of some kind by sea or land. In theory every British Government is a firm friend of peace, and every party repudiates the idea of aggression. But, one after another, every Government finds war too tempting to be resisted.

For these reasons the Anti-Aggression League has requested me to address a meeting of men who were chosen to represent the working classes and the mass of the industrious community, and they have invited you to consider the appeal that I make to you for support and co-operation. This great issue of our age —the replacing of the old international policy of war, aggression, and rivalry by the new international policy that has yet to be of peace, forbearance, and mutual confidence — especially concerns the great labouring class of the community, and its best hopes lie in their help. You, if I may address myself directly to those here to-night, who represent the great political and social organisations of the workmen, their Trades Unions, their Co-operative Societies, their political clubs, and their educational institutes, you, I say, have nothing to gain and everything to lose by this policy of national aggrandisement.

Your first interest is peace, for the horrors of war fall first and heaviest on you. You are the bulk of the people, who suffer most and first in times of national

distress. You are not dazzled by the prizes and honours of an adventurous campaign. These new markets which our great merchants are ever seeking to "open up" only derange the labour market at home, bringing violent gambling in the employment of capital, to be followed by gluts, reaction, and slack trade upon an over-stocked market and an over-stimulated labour population. This civilisation which our official and our capitalist classes are ever eager to discharge wholesale upon some foreign people who seem very much to object to it; this civilisation which they seem to think can be shot like the cargo in a ship, and not seldom like the charge in a cannon; this "civilisation" is no interest of yours and no work of yours.

You have nothing to gain by sacrificing your blood and savings in order that more traders may carry gunpowder and brandy and loaded calicoes farther and farther into the wilds of Africa; in order that the Czar may find himself checkmated in Central Asia; in order that the city of Alexander may be turned into a French or Italian town, and that the salaries of thousands of Europeans may be paid out of the taxes of Egypt. This continual stimulus to the aggressive instincts of the nation is a continual stimulus to the power of the military classes, and to all the retrograde elements in our political life. They strengthen the power and the opportunities of those who maintain the older class prejudices of our people, and they retard the growth of industrial habits and aims. The policy of the people is bound to be a peace policy in the long run; for it is only by peace that the condition of the people can possibly be raised, and it is only by a settled habit of peace that we can learn the habit of social justice, and the true solution of all our social problems.

War, the rumour of war—the very breath of war—postpones indefinitely the work of reforming our home abuses, our class anomalies, our ancient misgovernment. It postpones the remedies, and it gives a new authority to the classes who are mainly responsible for the diseases. Tell those who are so fond of touring round the globe to import—(I would rather say to inflict)—their civilisation on the backward nations and tribes, tell them that you want civilisation here at home, if you can get it genuine. Tell those who are so eager to govern Arabs, and Africans, and Afghans, and Chinese at modest stipends of £4000 or £5000 a year—ask them to see what can be done in the better government of our own island.

Before they settle the Eastern question, and the Central Asian mystery, and the great Euphrates Valley imbroglio, ask them to settle the land question in Ireland first, and then in Scotland and in England. Ask them to give the 4,000,000 of hard-worked people of London the chance of drinking pure water; ask them to give the people of London some means of controlling their own affairs, and of providing for their own wants; ask them to give a rational system of local government to the English and the Scotch and the Irish counties; ask them to do something to get our vast fabric of law out of the chaos of obscurity and confusion in which it is involved. Tell them that there are fifty burning social questions at home to solve, and wants of the English people to supply before they undertake to civilise the human race, and cause order and prosperity to reign in every corner of the old hemisphere, in every island at least of the new hemisphere. Tell those noisy philanthropists who call heaven and earth to witness of the "anarchy" on the Nile, the "anarchy" on the Balkans, and the murderous propensities of the Pacific islanders—tell them to go

and do something to prevent anarchy in Ireland. Whilst "civilisation" is making the tour of the world on board ironclads with eighty-ton guns, civilisation is terribly wanted in the three kingdoms at home. These "crises" and "demonstrations" suspend your interests and silence your claims. The old Roman said, "In the midst of arms the laws are silent." Silent is law in every sense, and the reforming of law, and the making of good laws most silent of all.

Our Prime Minister, not many years ago, set down some twenty-seven questions which he said were of vital and immediate moment to the people, and urgently awaited the attention of Parliament. Is one of the twenty-seven ever heard of in the midst of a "crisis," on the eve or even in the moment of a war, when the whole attention of Parliament and the Ministry is strained after some fierce international struggle? The hope of land reform, of law reform, of municipal reform, of county reform, even of the supply of wholesome water, is adjourned Session after Session. Ireland—and Ireland is only a case of old international oppression—thrusts out everything, and now the condition of Egypt is even more urgent than that of Ireland; and if this terrible imbroglio on the Nile *were* to land us in a European war, it would be years and years before we ever heard again of any one of Mr. Gladstone's twenty-seven burning questions. Therefore it is, I say, that peace, international justice, and quiet relations with all our neighbours, are the first of all the interests of the workmen. They alone of the community can make their voice heard without any prejudice; they lose most heavily by war, both in what they immediately suffer and in what they have to surrender. They may leave their bones to wither on distant lands, but they bring back no fortunes, no honours, no new markets for their capital, no new

posts for their class. They only can speak out boldly and with the irresistible voice of conscience, because they only have no interest in injustice, nothing to gain by conquest, and everything to lose by interference.

VIII

EGYPT

(1882)

I then applied these principles to the Egyptian imbroglio.

Now I ask you to apply these principles to the present crisis in Egypt. In what I have hitherto said, I have been expressing the views of the League in whose name I have spoken to-night. But in all that I may say, on the immediate cause of this crisis, and on the practical policy to pursue, I would rather be taken to express my own personal opinion, and not the view of any group whatever. What the League thinks on the crisis may be seen in their published statement. I should like to add something to that statement on my own responsibility.

What has led to the existing stage of crisis in Egypt? For a long time past, as you know, the European nations have been running a race together as to which should be foremost in pressing upon Egypt its civilisation and its protection. Their civilisation took the form at first of enormous loans of money at high interest, which the civilisers advanced to the rulers of Egypt in the philanthropic spirit in which Mr. Ralph Nickleby advanced cash to his pupils. These bounties of "civilisation" amount altogether to some £115,000,000. Then the civilisers, when

they found the country utterly sinking under this gigantic burden of debt, and racked by the most odious misgovernment, were good enough to invite themselves to fulfil various offices at large salaries to keep things a little straight. By a Parliamentary paper just published, we learn the names, and offices, and salaries of this vast army of European officials paid out of the taxes of the people of Egypt. Their total number is 1325; their total salaries amount to £373,704, about one-twelfth part of the entire available expenditure of the country. The number of the European civilisers is some 60,000 or (some say) 100,000. In consideration of their beneficent mission, these European missionaries of good works at 10 per cent have been exempt from local taxation. A native pays a tax of 12 per cent annual value on his house; the European lives tax free. The native fly-driver pays a heavy tax on his carriage; the European banker drives his pair tax free. Next, the civilisers having obliged the country with some 115 millions sterling at 7 and 10 per cent, obtained "concessions" for about thirty-five millions more. Then they kindly exempted themselves from taxation, were good enough to set up local courts in which they had the right to bring their civil and criminal affairs to a judge of their own nation. An army of European judges, and secretaries, and assessors, and barristers were called in at very liberal salaries, who kindly undertook to do the law for the Egyptian people.

The civilisers, of course, could not flood the country with their gold, make themselves free of local taxation, free of local jurisdiction, without coming into political conflicts with the Egyptian Government and people, as well as with one another. One Khedive or ruler of Egypt was dethroned by the pressure put by the European Powers on the Sultan

of Turkey; another was put in his place who well understood that he would be protected only so long as he did what he was told. And to maintain this system the notable device of the Control was set up. England and France have the right to send out each a Controller or official who shall supervise the entire expenditure of the country, provide for due payment of the foreign debt, and regulate and control the Budget. The Controllers are the two foreign Chancellors of the Exchequer, as it were, to the Egyptians. The whole financial system of the country is under their supervision. They are practically in the position of the House of Commons here, having ultimate control of the purse. Technically, I know they have no veto; but as every item of the Budget passes in review before them, and as they can object to any item they please, the Controllers are really the irresponsible rulers of Egypt. Each Controller receives a salary of nearly £4000 a year, and the entire cost of this one institution is £14,000 a year.

There are two other Controls, so that the Egyptian people pay about £30,000 a year for the luxury of not being allowed to raise or to expend their own taxes as they please, for fear that their foreign creditors may not get the whole of their four and a half millions of interest. The population of Egypt is much less than ten millions; and the revenue of this very poor people is nine or ten millions, or some £1 per head. The taxation of the people of India (and we are often told that it is as high as it can possibly be raised) is about 4s. per head—that of the Egyptian fellah about five times as much. Of this nine millions about one-half is carried straight out of the country to pay the foreign usurer, and only one-half of the total revenue is available for the administration of the country itself. Imagine your own feelings, if you had to send every

year some forty millions sterling out of the taxes of the country to pay Turkish, or Arab, or Chinese bondholders; and then, having paid that regularly, that you had to keep a Turkish pasha and a Chinese mandarin in London to control your expenditure, so that every penny of the Budget had to get the sanction of their excellencies, and if Mr. Gladstone or any other Chancellor of the Exchequer wished to put on or take off a tax, down would come a fleet of ironclads from the Bosphorus into the Thames, and train their 80-ton guns right in view of the Tower and Somerset House. That is the state of Egypt now.

Egypt is a very poor and a shamefully ill-governed country. The fellah or peasant of the Nile is one of the poorest, the most patient, ill-used, the most hopeless of all the cultivators of the soil to be found on this wide earth—outside of Ireland. For centuries he has been the prey of oppressors and tax-gatherers. But the worst exactions of his native Mahometan tax-gatherers never imposed on him so hopeless a burden as the cool, scientific, book-keeping sort of spoliation of his European civilisers.[1]

All this, be it remembered, is duly settled by high and mighty treaties. You hear much, you will hear more, of these international engagements, of firmans, and treaties, and obligations, and decrees, and what not. It is all as tight and technical as international lawyers can make it, just as tight and legal as Mr. Nickleby's bill transactions with young heirs. The Sultan has been bullied, and coaxed, and influenced. The Khedive has been coaxed and warned. There are bipartite treaties, and quadruple treaties, and all sorts of grand European proceedings. But the long

[1] I quite admit that from the purely *material* point of view much of this has been remedied and the condition of the fellah has been immensely improved—but with corresponding evils (1908).

and the short of it is this: Europeans having encouraged a profligate and unscrupulous Turkish Pasha, the late Khedive, in a career of incredible extravagance and folly, have forced another profligate and unscrupulous Turk—the late Sultan of Constantinople—to fling over the first old scoundrel, to bind over the country to all eternity to pay his scandalous debts, to set up a nominee and agent of the creditors as a new ruler of the country, and have taken the practical government of the country into their own hands in order to make sure that the interest of these loans shall be regularly paid. The same thing has happened in Egypt which happens in real life. The spendthrift heir to a property goes to the Jews to supply his extravagance and follies. They fool him to the top of his bent, and lend him any sum he likes at any usurious rate they can compel him to accept. The crash comes, and then they come into possession; they get a receiver of his property; and they squeeze his tenants to get their interest.

Well, the bondholders are now in possession of Egypt; or rather, they were the other day, till they beat a hasty retreat. That is the real meaning of this Egyptian mystery. We hear a great deal about international duties, about the Canal, and the interest of England in her Indian Empire! All that is idle talk, that is wide of the true facts. It is quite true that the Canal is a matter of great importance to English commerce. But no one has threatened it. The Canal is more than 100 miles from Alexandria, separated by 50 miles of impassable and uninhabited desert from the cultivable soil of Egypt. But does it follow that, because we have an interest to sail our ships freely through the Canal, the ruler of Egypt is to be our mere puppet—that we are to undertake the moral and material control of a population of five

millions in a country as vast as France, that we are to establish in the country a huge national debt, a huge army of foreign officials of our own; that we are to control the Budget, and meddle with their politics, make Ministries, and dynasties, and unmake them when we don't feel quite satisfied that they are looking after our money? And all this, forsooth, in order that our ships may sail through a canal 100 miles off!

Naturally this "spoiling" of the Egyptians, which they now call "exploitation," this control and dry-nursing, roused native hostility. Strange to say, the Egyptians grew sulky at so much civilisation. The 1300 civilisers, paid £373,000 per annum out of their taxes, seemed a little overdone; the 60,000 Europeans living tax free; the local courts of alien law and foreign judges; the 4½ millions (half the total revenue) carried off to foreign bondholders. The Mahometan population conceived what is called a "fanatical" objection to the foreigners; they even blasphemed the value of the civilisation; they murmured it was rather too dear, and they talked about a Parliament. For some time the head of this movement was in the native army, headed by a native gentleman, Arabi Pasha. A Parliament was called, and soon began a struggle between the Parliament, the Army, the University, and the native leaders on the one side, and the Khedive, some of his official world and the European ring of civilisers on the other. The ring, and when I say the ring I mean the 1300 European salaried officers of the Egyptian Government and their belongings, the agents of the banks, and railways, gas works, and other concessions of 35 millions, and the European population which had planted itself in Egypt—the ring, I say, chose to treat the native movement as a military rebellion.

For months the Press, the Foreign Offices and political world of Europe have been deluged with outcries that it was all the work of mutinous soldiers. It suited the ring to call a national movement, provoked by their meddling, a mutiny. Unhappily our public representatives took side against the leaders; they misled our Foreign Office; they openly avowed their hostility to the native party. The English representatives refused to recognise its chief, and plotted his downfall; and to fall in the East is usually to be killed or exiled. It is as if, in the struggle in France in 1877 between Gambetta and the Republican party and Marshal MacMahon and his Ministry, Lord Lyons and the English Embassy had entered into the struggle, and had eagerly stimulated the Marshal to crush the Republic. The pretext that the movement was a military mutiny is a wild and silly calumny. Events have proved it; the strength of the movement is not military, but civil. It lies in the great university or school of Cairo, the intellectual centre of the Mussulman world, with nearly 20,000 members. It lies in the intelligent people of the city and the headmen of the villages. Events have proved, I say, how idle is this cry of a military mutiny. If it were so, why has the national Parliament placed itself in the front; why is it that we are told that Europeans are hardly safe in a village, whilst the whole army is now at Alexandria? Egypt is not the first nor the only place where a national rising against a corrupt monarchy has been headed and represented by soldiers.

We know something ourselves about political colonels who stood up by the cause of the people. But military mutiny or not, the cause of Arabi succeeded, in spite of the hostility, the intrigues, and the threats of the European Consuls and the European Controllers. The Khedive did not take

the advice of the English Controller and did not arrest Arabi; but Arabi's affection for the Control was, of course, not increased by the advice. He became, however, the leading Minister of the Khedive, and proceeded to carry out a number of changes in the Egyptian army and the Egyptian finances. Now, I am not concerned to argue that Arabi's measures were wise or good. Perhaps he is not as admirable a War Minister as Mr. Childers, or as consummate a financier as Mr. Gladstone. But he was, for the time being, the lawful Minister of Egypt, and he was dealing with the details of Egyptian administration. Now the one thing that the British officials in Egypt will not tolerate is that Egyptians should deal with the details of Egyptian administration in any way but what the officials like. Our Controller in Egypt is an Indian official. He is paid nearly £4000 a year out of the Egyptian taxes to prevent the Egyptians from spending their revenue as they like. The English Controller, I say, seems to look upon himself as the resident at an Indian Rajah's Court—his practical tutor and master.

There are three of these separate controls in Egypt, and the principal Controller seems to assume the position of superintending Providence. To such lengths does this meddling go, that you will find in the Blue-books a high international question made of some articles in the native papers. The English Envoy demands and obtains the suppression of two native journals for two articles set out in the Blue-book, which simply (and I think very reasonably) express the irritation of the native mind at the European exploitation of their country. From November last the story is the same—the Consuls and Controllers interfering in every detail of government, thwarting the formation of the national party, openly instigating

the Khedive to crush Arabi, intriguing with his political rivals, and seeking to destroy the influence of the Chamber. The part taken by the British authorities in Egypt was the part taken in France in 1877, by the reactionary Monarchic and Imperialist parties, to crush Gambetta and the Republic, with this difference, that in Egypt it was the act of a foreign and avowedly friendly Government. At last the British Government took that fatal step of sending a powerful fleet to Alexandria, and under its guns demanding by an ultimatum the dismissal of Arabi, his exile, the break-up of his party, and the reconstitution of the old system of nursing.

Lord Granville was warned on many sides that this would certainly produce a dangerous excitement; you will find in Blue-book No. 7 that Lord Granville was informed, and repeated to France, "that the political advantages of the demonstration by the fleet outweighed the danger it would cause to the Europeans in Egypt." The fleet, as we know, utterly failed to effect the object sought. The Egyptians were not cowed by it; they were roused to fury by it. I honour the Egyptian people that they were capable of such manly indignation. Where should we be if the Czar and the French Republic sent a fleet into the Thames, and in front of the Tower served an ultimatum on the Queen, to send Mr. Gladstone to Australia, to dismiss the House of Commons, and to restore Lord Salisbury, with a French and Russian dry-nurse to control him! Well, the Egyptians have feelings, and they resented, as was natural, this insolent and impotent menace. What followed? The Government—the Government of Mr. Gladstone—actually went to the Sultan of Turkey and implored him to send an official armed with his Imperial authority to crush the national

party and restore the dry-nurse system. In the history of national humiliation I know nothing so tragic as that the Government of Mr. Gladstone should go on its knees to the despot at Constantinople and crush out the rising hopes of a people struggling into some kind of independence and life. The Government well knew what crushing Arabi meant. To crush a national leader in the Sultan's dominions is to kill him. A man was chosen, well known to be one of the most unscrupulous ruffians of the Pashas, and words can hardly exceed that! They were warned that the Pasha sent out was at once treacherous, reckless, and merciless. The Government wanted Arabi to be made away with! Well, he was too much for them—too much for Dervish, and the Sultan, and the Khedive, and the British and French fleets.

We all know what followed. The Egyptian army and people were stung to frenzy by this attempt on the part of their foreign creditors, first to crush a legitimate national movement towards representative government, by cannon, and then the attempt to crush it by the force of Sultan and Pasha. A horrible, savage, and most abominable massacre resulted. I am not about to defend or to palliate any massacre; and this one was cruel and brutal enough. But let us remember that the Italian nation, with its political and intellectual leaders, with Garibaldi at their head, have just been celebrating, six hundred years after the event, the great massacre of the French in Sicily, known as the Sicilian Vespers. That is now held in Italy to be a glorious event. Well, I do not think so. But I say that the massacre in Alexandria on the 11th inst. was not unlike the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers, except only that it was not one-hundredth part so bloody, and that it had the additional excuse of religious fanaticism. I deplore

the innocent blood that was then shed; but I say that the British Government did everything that men could do to make a massacre probable; they were warned that a massacre was more than probable; and they urged the French Government to go on, as the political advantages to be gained outweighed the risk of massacre.

And now what are we going to do? 30,000 or 40,000 Europeans have left the country. Perhaps nearly as many remain. The Control has broken down, the dry-nursing system has come to an end. There let it stay. Let the Europeans who have left Egypt stay away. If they have made themselves intolerable to the Egyptian people, let them take the consequences. If they have sunk their money in Egypt, that is their affair; if they have gambled in Egyptian bonds, I cannot say I particularly pity them. But the system of taking into our hands the entire administration of Egypt, receiving its taxes, paying ourselves for the trouble of getting our money, nursing the native government, using the native ruler as our mere puppet, treating Egypt in fact as a conquered country, has broken down. I am glad it has. It was a curse to Egypt, to the world, and to England.[1] Our Indian officials, civil and military, and all whom they influence, and all our military, and half our civil service, have come to think that anything which is convenient for India is right, and just, and necessary. Egypt lies on the road to India, and so Egypt must be made dependent, nursed if need be, but also annexed and conquered if need be.

I am coming to look on our Indian empire as one of the greatest burdens that ever befell a nation, if

[1] The occupation and administration of Egypt has been renewed, under better conditions, but the inherent evils of the system are as evil as ever—as dangerous as ever (1908).

India is the eternal excuse for every injustice, every aggression, and any crime. These Indian habits and ideas have corrupted our soldiers, our officials, our Ministries, our Parliament. Men who rule 240 millions think another 10 millions of slaves a mere trifle. They get to look on all Orientals equally as "niggers." When you read the despatches of Sir A. Colvin, you see that he treats the Khedive as a dependent Rajah, and Egypt as if it were part and parcel of the Indian empire. Talk to these Indian soldiers and you hear them say that of course Egypt lies so much in the way, that one day we must take it ourselves. Others talk about a Sepoy army from Bombay and a little of the rough-and-ready justice of Kabul. Are they quite sure that a native army of Indians can be trusted to fight their co-religionists in Egypt?—that Arabi may not raise the flag of the Prophet in a way that may vibrate through Asia, and rouse all the dormant enthusiasm of the servants of Islam? Are they quite sure that Europe will stand by and see Sepoys in possession of the Nile and of Alexandria, and will suffer English generals to hang the native officers and leaders as easily as we hung the Afghan officers and leaders at Kabul?

And all this wild and criminal bluster is supposed to be justified by the one word—the Canal. Well, the Canal is not a British river; it is an ocean highway open to the world. The covetous rivalry of European Powers to possess Egypt existed long before the Canal was thought of, and will continue, even if the Canal were to disappear. When Napoleon and Pitt fought for Egypt, there was no Canal, and Egypt was not even the road to India! When Palmerston and Thiers fought the old Egyptian question in Mehemet Ali's time, there was no Canal. The French, at times, have been just as eager to dominate Egypt as

we are, and so have the Italians and the Russians, and yet neither Power has any especial concern with the Canal. The Canal is a miserable excuse, just as the Bosphorus was, or Cyprus was and is! The Egyptian people live miles away from the Canal; the possession of Egypt is in no way necessary to the free use of the Canal; and a series of bloody struggles for the possession of Egypt is the worst and most costly and most criminal way to secure the use of the Canal. How miserable a pretext it is that the sole object is to secure the Canal is shown by this: When Mr. Gladstone formally defined in Parliament the objects of the Conference, he expressly said that the Canal was not one of them. When he stated the ends of British policy, he said nothing about the Canal. He mentioned three objects, not one of which is a national concern of ours, and what was the fourth object as he stated then? He then stated the true one—the money interest of certain bondholders and shareholders.

It is a miserable fiction to tell us that all this elaborate system of the three Controls, the international tribunals, and the various rights under the firmans, is aimed at securing the passage of English ships through the Canal. It is a system for plundering the Egyptians, for riveting on them the chains of that debt-slavery which is regarded as their permanent and natural condition. The Greek philosopher thought that all non-Greeks were naturally slaves; and so the British financier looks on the Egyptians as naturally debt-slaves. The firmans and decrees and treaties which have been wrung from the weakness and the cupidity of Sultan and Khedive are an elaborate system for handing over the Egyptians to their European creditors. It is an enormity to saddle a wretched body of peasants, as poor as any Asiatics, with a nominal debt of 100 millions, nearly as much as the

whole debt of India with its 240 millions, more than the debt of Prussia and many of the rich and powerful nations of Europe. It is an enormity to tax the fellah of the Nile nearly £1 per head, the taxation of the Russian people, five times that of the Indian. And a still greater enormity to carry off to Europe half of the entire revenue of the country.

This is organised plunder and extortion. No treaties, or firmans, or decrees can make it just or reasonable in the eyes of morality. Is it conceivable that this country can be about to proceed to the desperate crime of attempting by war to restore this apparatus of extortion? What is it to the people and Government of this country that a dozen banking firms of Paris and London, and their clients, should lose some of that money which they recklessly placed at usury? Why is it that the blood and money of our people are to be poured out in order to maintain the speculators who have farmed the taxes of the fellah, and the officials who have forced themselves on the ruler of Egypt? I am far from demanding repudiation of the debt, gigantic as it is, and unscrupulous as it is for us to saddle the Egyptian people with the follies of a few vicious Turks. I do not ask for the dismissal of the Europeans whom the Egyptians desire to retain in their service. But I ask that this nation shall leave the usurers and the Egyptian people to settle it. I protest against the iniquity of engaging in war, jointly with European Powers, or making the Turk our agent, or singly ourselves. I protest against the firing one shot or the spending one penny to restore a system which has broken down, to replace Europeans who have run away, and to set on its legs again the legalised plunder of Egypt.

It is no business of ours to assist speculators in getting their 7 per cent by using the fiction of

European law to an Oriental and Mahometan people. We have, as a nation, no concern in securing the salaries of a crowd of adventurous Europeans who have forced themselves into good berths at Alexandria and Cairo. The air is full of grand reasons of State. We hear of international treaties, the rivalry of nations, and the paramount British interest of India. Thrust these solemn impostures aside even when they are repeated with a grand air by that new convert to Jingoism, the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Whatever there may be in these things, there is one thing paramount over all—that it is an infamy to use the armed might of England to do the dirty work of rings of financial speculators and adventurous place-hunters. It would be an indelible shame on us to crush back into the slavery of the other subjects of the Sultan a people who are just stirring towards national life and freedom. I cannot believe that a statesman so keen as Lord Granville will ever commit the folly of reviving that system of nursing Egypt of which he has himself pointed out all the evils. And I will not think that a Government of which Mr. Gladstone is the chief can be about to enter on a European war (for it may mean that) to crush out in blood and tyranny a weak but inoffensive people for the sake of an organised and cruel system of unscrupulous money-lending.

Tell them that their own eloquent protests against Turkish misrule, Russian and Austrian misrule, will fall back on them like coals of fire on their head. It is not the misrule of the Turks, it is Englishmen fighting to rivet on a weak people the chains of a debt-slavery. For my part, I will not believe it. It would be too dark a close for the political life of Mr. Gladstone. For my part, I am ready to leave Egypt for the Egyptians. It would be monstrous that this country should be dragged into the attempted conquest

of a difficult country as large as France or Germany on the stale and tawdry pretext that it is required for our prestige. Let us all appeal from the Ministers in office in 1882 to those same Ministers in opposition in 1880. Let us make it impossible ever to say that we were thrust into a wanton and unjust shedding of blood solely because our Foreign Office had received a merited rebuff and our navy had been paraded in a foolish and futile menace.

An Appeal to Mr. Gladstone

(*July* 1, 1882)

The foregoing Address had hardly been published and widely circulated when I issued an open letter to Mr. Gladstone, which reached him just before the bombardment of Alexandria, the prelude to the iniquitous conquest of Egypt.

I reissue it after twenty-six years have passed, because all that has taken place since justifies, in my opinion, the fears I then expressed, and proves the soundness of the principles I then maintained.

In spite of the immense improvement in the material condition of Egypt and the admirable results obtained by the eminent statesmen and the beneficent institutions that our rule has established on the whole valley of the Nile, the inherent evils of conquest and annexation remain and fester in that land.

I repeat these protests and I recall these principles of international morality because the same evil courses have been constantly followed by England in Burmah, in Tibet, in China, in South Africa, as well as by Russia, Germany, Italy, and most conspicuously are still being attempted by France in Morocco (1908).

SIR—I venture respectfully to address you in a time of crisis, when the reputation of your whole life is at stake—and not merely your reputation as a statesman, but as a man. Every principle that moved you in the most famous effort of your political career, as well as every profession that made you the most popular Minister of this century, now draws you to the side of justice and peace. You are being drawn to the side of oppression and war by interests and motives, the strength of which I make no attempt to deny, and the difficulty of resisting which is extraordinarily great.

Almost every sentence that you uttered in the most memorable campaign of modern politics would serve my turn, if criticism were my purpose. But I have too deep a sense of the sincerity of those noble counsels you gave to the nation but two years ago, to charge you lightly with inconsistency; and I know the complications of the crisis too well to look on it as any plain and clear matter. The crisis in Egypt imposes on English statesmen a dilemma as painful as ever harassed a Minister; and just and wise men of the same way of thinking, we know, come to different conclusions thereon. I shall waste no time in quoting from your speeches, nor in establishing general maxims. The question for us all to-day is whether the peculiar circumstances of Egypt justify a policy which you have taught our people to repudiate elsewhere. Is Egypt a real exception to the principle, that British interests shall be no pretext for international injustice?

Here a compromise with principle which is easy to many statesmen is not possible to you. The passion with which you exhorted the nation to throw off the evil system of the past sprang from a truly religious impulse in your own heart, a loathing for wickedness, a spiritual sense of moral rather than material interests.

Having lifted up your voice with a power over the people that has never been equalled by any English statesman, and with a religious fervour for right which is hardly ever brought into politics, you cannot in your old age launch the nation on a new career of international crime without covering your life with a stain. It would be not so much a mistake in policy as a recantation of faith.

All then turns on the issue, whether the special conditions of Egypt make that policy a duty there which is a crime elsewhere ; whether the theories of Lord Beaconsfield were wrong rather in this, that they were applied on the Danube instead of the Nile. As a general principle all is plain ; as a matter of duty your own position is notorious. Men say, and some of those whom you most trust, that this particular case is a peculiar exception ; that the real condition is not the apparent one ; that the true dangers and interests are unknown to the public ; that there are higher interests even than right and good faith ; that there is a subtlety about this Egyptian problem which is lost on the vulgar mind. All this may be true ; but the burden of proof rests on those who assert the exception ; and it will require all your skill, if the nation is not to feel its conscience wounded and its self-respect lowered by a sudden change of front in the hour of temptation.

There is about all attempts to justify aggression in Egypt that same vagueness and uncertainty of ground, that juggling with reasons, and that appeal to contradictory motives which we have heard so often in Turkey or Kabul, the Greek islands and Cyprus. It is even greater. The advocates of aggression do not rely steadily on any one of these. India, the Empire, British interests, commerce, our countrymen in personal danger, English capital sunk in Africa, the large

financial interests at stake, our international obligations, the harmony of Europe, the cause of good government, the emancipation of the slaves, the amelioration of the lot of the fellah, the jealousies and ambition of France, with a general background of "civilisation," make up the shifting reasons for the one solid end, which is — military operations on Egyptian soil. It is the old story; the same grand phrases which so often did duty on the Danube and the Bosphorus, on the Vaal and the Indus. You tore them, sir, into shreds and patches in Mid-Lothian. Can these rags now obscure your sight?

Grapple with any one of these reasons, and the advocates of war straightway fall back on another. If we deny that the Indian Empire involves the British occupation of every country that lies in the way, they refer us to the financial interests we have in Egypt. If we deny that it is the business of the State to collect debts, we are told that it is not the interest of the bondholders so much as the danger of French conquest. When we say that France is clearly opposed to war, then we have rehearsed to us the story of British capital invested in business, civilisation, and the poor fellah. These things are, some of them, desirable objects enough, but separated by a gulf from any connection with English conquest; or they are private matters in which the State has no concern; or they are mere phrases or bugbears. The people who affect the higher politics shake their heads, and ask if we have heard of that despatch. There is the old hollow assumption of superior information and foresight. "Serious" politicians, as they love to call themselves, ask us volatile persons if we know all that there is behind Tewfik, Arabi, and Dervish, and what the French Consul is aiming at, and what the Intelligence Department has just heard. They shuffle

these objects and motives backwards and forwards, and nimbly avoid a real probing of any one. You, sir, have shown us that the peace and good name of a great people are not to be bemouthed away by diplomatic brag. When you tore up all this artificial network of injustice, you made it impossible for the nation to have it woven again under its eyes.

It cannot escape you that these counsels of crime are not brought to us by pure hands. It is not politicians of wisdom and experience who call for the establishment of British power in Egypt. It is money-lenders and shareholders. There are in England and in France groups of very rich men with enormous financial interests in that country. Four millions and a half yearly is paid to them on loans alone. They have further invested an immense sum—as much, we are told, as thirty-five millions—in works, business, and adventures on Egyptian soil. There are 1353 Europeans who have places and salaries under the Khedive. The Bourses of the West have made Cairo and Alexandria hunting-grounds for their speculations. Their class owns or influences half the Press in Europe. It influences, and sometimes makes, half the governments of Europe. Here is the true source of all the persistent political intrigues of which for years Egypt has been the field. The ultimate end of these wealthy persons is a perfectly legitimate one: it is the increase of their own fortunes. But this is not an end which concerns the State. And all the lofty reasons of State which they inspire in the Press, and impose upon diplomatists, are deeply tainted at their core by the fact that the root of them is the desire of rich men to become richer. I suspect imposing political schemes and imperial interests which rest on an obvious financial purpose.

The oldest and most imposing of the political

reasons for armed intervention in Egypt is the fear that some other Power is likely to occupy it before us. In other words, we are to seize Egypt in order to forestall France. That is one of the shallow traditions of a school of diplomatic quidnuncs. It still has its charms for the editors of thoughtful journals. Such a policy in itself is neither wise nor honourable; but it is needless now to discuss it. There exists at this moment not the slightest ground to justify the suspicion that France has any such design. Now, indeed, less than ever. The evidence of the Blue-books is all the other way. England for months has been pushing on France to consent to intervention. And the argument, if argument it can be called, drops to the ground by the force of events. On the contrary, the mutual jealousies of France and England in Egypt are a very strong reason for not interfering. Whilst it is certain that France will make no advance there if we do not, it is far from clear that we should not find her ultimately waiting to dispute our conquest. An expedition to Egypt means in the long run war with France. Is that to be the crown of Mr. Gladstone's political life?[1]

Again we hear of international duties, treaties, and settlements in which "Europe" is interested. But events have disposed of this as completely as they have of the supposed designs of France. The settlements have settled nothing; and "Europe" is at liberty, and is perfectly willing, to make any settlement *de novo*. These settlements and treaties were never real settlements in any political sense. They were concessions wrung by England and France from two Eastern governments, in order to secure for our people the utmost possible advantage in their private

[1] At Fashoda in 1898 we came within measurable distance of it (1908).

and financial adventures; and in order to place the internal system of Egypt at their entire disposal. The scheme has proved not workable; it has broken to pieces. Are you, sir, about to restore it at the price of a formidable and guilty war for the sake of the persons interested? The pretended international and European nature of the settlement was always a figment. It was a mere financial expedient which has brought anarchy into Egypt, ruin on the speculators, and infinite anxiety to the governments of Europe.

Now we hear of the anarchy in Egypt, and the paramount duty of suppressing it. Can anything be more certain than that the anarchy (such as it is) is the direct work of the allied fleets? The fleets at Alexandria made the anarchy. Withdraw the fleets and it will cease. The "anarchy," as it is called, that is, the irritation of certain classes in Egypt with the government of the Khedive, has been steadily growing for years. It is the obvious consequence of any attempt to govern under the pressure of foreign dictation, supported by continual menace of foreign intervention. It is easy to produce anarchy, riot, and massacre, in any Eastern state—or indeed in many Western states. Send the fleets to the Bosphorus and deliver an ultimatum to the Sultan; you will see a very lively outburst of fanaticism. Or try the same at Tangiers, or at Athens, or Zanzibar. You can always produce anarchy anywhere by goading a people to frenzy where any spark of courage and independence is left them. The great aggressive empires always begin by producing anarchy in regions which they intend to annex. France did this but the other day in Tunis. Anarchy was the pretext for invasion in the Transvaal and in Afghanistan. You, sir, have shown us that the way to restore order there was to withdraw the menace.

As to the lives and property of our countrymen, it is your duty to protect them in all things right and reasonable. But it is plain why they are in danger; and plain how to relieve them. They never were in any risk whatever till a long course of foreign dictation culminated in an act of armed menace. Their safety will be secured by withdrawing the fleet, as its presence produced their danger. There is no more reason to suppose that (apart from foreign dictation) the lives and property of Englishmen will be less safe in Egypt than in Turkey or any other part of the East. If our countrymen choose to carry their wealth and their skill to distant lands, they must do so at their own risk. If they behave so as to rouse the hostility of the population, that is their fault and they must answer for it. It is a monstrous assumption that this nation is to be responsible for all their adventures; and must straightway annex any country where their claims to domineer are thwarted or disliked. Our adventurous people thrust themselves and their business into every country in the globe, civilised and uncivilised. The sense that the power of England is behind them makes them reck little of forbearance, good faith, or conciliation. They assume the rights of conquerors, knowing that in the long run they can always force the State into conquest. To yield to their claims on the State is to increase their confidence and stimulate their demands. Such a policy indeed can have but one issue. It would lead us to universal dominion, a result too preposterous to contemplate.

We hear much sonorous talk about "civilisation," the condition of the fellah, the suppression of the slave-trade, and the "Western institutions" which we have planted in Egypt. Excellent objects no doubt; but what have these to do with eighty-ton guns, a fleet of ironclads, sepoys, an armed occupation, and virtual

annexation? These laudable purposes would be equally good reasons for annexing Syria, or Asia Minor, or indeed any other country in Asia or Africa. If these great blessings are to be poured out from our cannon, let our missionary fleets and armies tour round the world dispensing the gospel of civilisation. To bring them forward as grounds for a war in Egypt is a shallow and shameless pretext, which no one would ever have heard of, had there not been one hundred and fifty millions or so of Western gold trembling for its dividends and interest.

Turn it which way we will, it comes back always to this—that we are to go to war really for the money interests of certain rich men in London and Paris. It is no doubt of great importance to them to get their four and a half millions regularly out of the taxes of Egypt. It is a great convenience to them to be exempt from taxes, to have virtual control of the internal government, to have concessions, business, companies, works, and the rest, to have their own courts, their own law, and their own judges, to hold a crowd of offices in the Egyptian service, to be a dominant caste in a foreign land. All this is very desirable to the persons themselves. But it is no concern of this country to guarantee them these profits, privileges, and places. It would be blood-guilt in this country to enforce these guarantees at the cost of war. The interests of these rich and adventurous persons are not British interests; but the interests of certain British subjects. And between their interests and war and conquest, domination and annexation—how vast is the gulf! Does it necessarily follow that, because certain Englishmen hold large sums in Unified bonds, and because they have invested much capital in Egyptian works, that Europeans are to be guaranteed as a dominant caste; and that, if the

Egyptian people make any effort to displace one rivet of the dominion, there is instant appeal to war, ending in virtual conquest?

Our people have large interests in the debts of America, of Italy, of Turkey, of Greece, of Spain. Much British capital is embarked in all of these countries. Is that a ground, under any conceivable circumstances, for securing our people a local domination, to be followed by conquest if this foreign dominion be not patiently borne? Most of the conditions present in Egypt exist in a degree in Turkey and even in Spain. There too our people are owed enormous sums; there too is a mass of British capital sunk in industrial and commercial ventures; there is very often anarchy in Turkey as well as in Spain; and there would be anarchy again the moment we sent a fleet to produce it. There is a great deal of barbarism there, and a fanatical and idle population. But the man would be a madman who pretended that these conditions in Spain or Turkey led us logically to enforce the claims of these creditors by war, and ultimately to conquer these countries.

There is, indeed, but one plausible ground after all for armed intervention in Egypt, and that is a ground which you, sir, have torn to pieces. It is the old windbag cry of the Empire in danger. Is it possible that in your lifetime and in your ministry, this phantom is again to rear its head! Your whole political life is pledged to the principle that "Empire" is no justification of national injustice. You have told us that no doctrine can be more criminal than this: that a nation has a right to oppress, whenever it becomes convenient. What, then, is the syllogism that leads us irresistibly from the safety of the Empire to the conquest of Egypt? The safety of the Empire seems to demand any achievement that can enter into

the visions of ambitious and restless men. Hot-headed soldiers and hare-brained viceroys swore that the Empire was not safe, till our ensign floated at Kabul, Candahar, and Herat; as they will tell us to-morrow it must float at Baghdad, or Pekin. Sir Bartle Frere thought the sun of England was set whilst Cetewayo lived and reigned in Zululand. The theories of a military expert about the Empire are indeed as wild as those of a German philologist, and as anti-social as those of a Russian Nihilist. It is the part of a statesman to treat these ravings as we treat the barkings of chained mastiffs. And of all living statesmen, it is especially your part to put them away from the counsels of the State.

When the windbag pretext of Empire is pricked, the one residuum is the Canal. No one denies that the Canal is of great importance to this country, on political as well as commercial grounds. That importance, as a highway to India, has been much exaggerated. But granting its importance to be real, to what extravagant conclusions is the Canal supposed to lead! Reasonable military and international precautions against any interruption of the waterway would be approved by public opinion in Europe, as much as they would at home. Is there the least reason to suppose they would not be accepted in Egypt? It is a long chain of hypotheses indeed which leads from the Canal to the conquest of Egypt. The freedom of a watercourse less than one hundred miles long through an uninhabited desert does duty for the annexation of a country fifty or one hundred miles away, larger than France, with a population of ten millions, and two of the greatest cities of the East.

The logical *sorites* is this. The passage through the Canal is of vital interest to England. But the use of it implies that England should dominate throughout

Egyptian territory. Now, this domination implies that Englishmen should be free from the local taxes, the jurisdiction, and the government. But they cannot be really free without they possess the virtual control of the whole internal policy of Egypt. Yet, if this control is interfered with, it is the duty of the British Government to secure it to them by force. Again, if this force is not at once successful, the virtual annexation of the country must follow. But the virtual annexation of the country means an enormous burden on our already overgrown Empire; and it will almost certainly lead to a war with one or more of the Powers of Europe. Hence, to be sure of a free passage through the Canal, war and conquest in Egypt are a logical necessity. Q. E. D. What is this but the old story that the Indian Empire would not be safe, unless Christian women could be freely ravished on the Danube; and that the occupation of Cyprus would shower steam-ploughs throughout the length and breadth of Asia Minor?

We look, sir, to you to distinguish the rational and legitimate interests of the State from the personal interests of private Englishmen, and the fantastic projects of political dreamers. The only interest of the nation in Egypt is this, that the Canal shall not be closed against us, and that no European rival shall found an Empire on the Nile. There is at this moment no reasonable ground to fear either of these evils. But what measures may be necessary, by force of arms or international agreements, to guard against either, will not be refused by any party in this country. The passage of the Canal could never be guaranteed in any absolute sense, even if it were incorporated in the Empire: it would still be liable to treacherous destruction or obstruction, even if it were in the Punjab or in Ireland. What a farce then to tell us

that its existence is secured by meddling with the promotion of Egyptian officers, by suppressing native newspapers at Alexandria, and denying the right of a National Chamber to add £300,000 to the Budget! To pretend that the freedom of the Canal requires the reconstitution of the *status quo* by armed intervention is like saying, as our grandfathers said, that commerce would not be free in the English Channel till we had suppressed the Republic in France. In other words, and you, sir, will not deny the position: *the Canal is not worth the evils of conquering Egypt, even if conquest were the sole means of securing it.* M. Lesseps tells us, as common sense told us before, that the real danger to the Canal lies in the dread of an English invasion and conquest.

The settlement of Egypt on some tolerable basis that may promise stability and order is no doubt a British interest of a very real kind. And the nation will welcome any solution that the counsels of Europe can devise — without war and without oppression. But two things are certain: the Control and the *status quo* have utterly failed, and any settlement to be forced on the Egyptian people by war and invasion is doomed to failure as well. The *status quo* has done some good; but it had the incurable vice of being the domination of an alien caste, directed to secure their personal interests, resting on intrigue and menace, but not on acceptance and not on force. The ascendency of a foreign race, even where they have much to offer to the natives, and even where the natives are so far behind them in wealth and knowledge, cannot be permanently secured without conquest; and it must be maintained by a protracted struggle for supremacy. If that ascendency is to be secured under new forms and after a bloody contest, it will be the occasion of a series of rebellions and wars. We repudiate, as equally

wild and criminal, the burdening this country with a British Algeria on the banks of the Nile.[1]

It was not for an English ministry wantonly to destroy the Control and the so-called settlement of Egypt, so long as it seemed to be working, and apart from a general revolution. But the Control and the settlement altogether being swept away in the crash, it is a duty to review the situation afresh and to seek some new solution. No diplomatic grandiloquence, no international treaties, no firmans or decrees, can obscure the fact—that the effect of the settlement was to make the Khedive the manifest tool of his foreign patrons, to secure to foreign Powers the practical administration of the country, to maintain the sixty thousand Europeans in Egypt in the privileges of a dominant caste, to place the offices of the country mainly in their hands, to offer unlimited opportunities for Western enterprise, to revolutionise the life of the country in the interest of Western capitalists, and finally and mainly, to secure the punctual payment for ever to Western creditors of about one-half of the entire revenue of the nation.

To saddle the fellahs of the Nile for all time with a debt of more than one hundred millions, more than the debt of Prussia, is an international crime which no treaties can gloze over and no imperial interests can excuse. To carry off year by year half the revenue of a poor country to pay to foreigners for their usurious and fraudulent loans, forced on a half-lunatic despot, is a mere financial juggle; and nothing can make its maintenance worthy of a just nation, though its settlement was effected by right honourables, ambassadors, and European treaties. One need not deny that some temporary relief has been given to the

[1] Therein lies the present, continuous, and indestructible "*unrest*" in Egypt, which will one day become an intolerable evil (1908).

native; or that the money of Europe has afforded some material improvements. But the reduction of a population of ten millions to a systematic debt-slavery, enforced from time to time by war, is dearly bought by the partial introduction of Western law, railways, and gas-works. And "civilisation," as it is understood by syndicates of bankers and *concessionnaires*, is not worth the bloody and fraudulent crushing down of an Eastern people under the insolent dominion of a motley tribe, alien in race, religion, and habit.

Sir, a great occasion is now yours: to find some tolerable settlement of the Egyptian imbroglio, without war and without international oppression. The talk we hear about Imperial interests and British rights is a flimsy varnish, as we see, to cover the lust of conquest and the thirst for gold. It is idle to discuss whether Arabi Pasha represents a national or a military movement. It is certain that the domination of Egypt cannot be secured to England without a desultory war with the natives first, and a possible war with Europe afterwards. The permanent exploitation of Egypt by Western speculators and adventurers is an object which it is worthy of your career formally to repudiate as a national concern. It will avail your good name hereafter but little, that you raised your voice against the persecution of the Christians in Turkey, if one of the last acts of your official life shall have been to rivet on one province of that Empire a debt-slavery to their Christian masters. There is one consideration I omit; for it would be an insult to you and your colleagues. I will not conceive it possible that you can be about to commit this people entrusted to your care to the crime and risk of a new conquest, simply because the official policy of the past has led to a disaster which you and they from the first foresaw.

July 1, 1882.

IX

THE BOER WAR

(*December* 1899)

The Boer War raised so many of the questions treated in previous sections, and illustrated so clearly the evils of vicious policy abroad, that it is impossible altogether to omit notice of it. Nor can it be charged that my friends or myself failed to assert the same principles for which we had contended for a whole generation. We formed associations, held meetings, published addresses and pamphlets, and for four years sought to bring our fellow-citizens to reasonable views. I now issue a few extracts from various speeches and writings of my own during that dismal period.

It is a satisfaction to know that the chaos and desolation caused in South Africa by that cruel folly are being slowly cured, and that an era of peace and progress may be looked for on lines so different from those anticipated by the misguided authors of the War. As I write, the three chief states in South Africa are being directed by men who in arms or in council were the most eminent leaders of the Boer defence. And their wise and generous efforts promise a settlement harmonious and prosperous—now that our country has wasted £250,000,000 and 20,000 lives—in the vain attempt to conquer and enthral a free people (*1908*).

THE foundation of Rhodesia and the militant phase

of the Chartered Company caused deep alarm in the Transvaal and its neighbour. The two Boer Republics which had trekked forth, fought, and suffered in order to be free of British dominion, now found themselves engulfed by the Empire—North, South, East, and West—finally shut out from the Northern wilderness, and girt on North and West by British powers, all controlled by the great "Empire-builder," who openly aimed at bringing South Africa, from the Zambesi to the Cape, under the Union Jack. If from that hour the Boers did not strain every nerve to prepare to defend their freedom, they would have deserved to lose it without a blow.

But the Transvaal soon found its independence menaced by a new force. In 1886, it was discovered that most valuable gold-fields existed in the Transvaal, and miners and gold agencies poured in. Wealth, far more vast than that of the diamond fields, as spread over a larger area, a far larger outland population, greater fortunes and bigger companies arose. In eleven years Johannesburg became, not only the wealthiest, the most modern, but the largest town in South Africa. The annual output of gold rose to about twelve millions. The expenditure of the State rose from £114,000 to between four and five millions. The Outlander male population began to exceed that of burghers. The old President believed that the Outlanders were about to swamp the Boers. As they pressed for political power the Transvaal narrowed its terms, until at last an immense body of aliens—a majority, far the wealthiest and most cultivated—found itself in the grasp of a jealous, obstinate, unfriendly, unyielding government, which regarded them as in a state of permanent conspiracy to displace it. And this, no doubt, was quite true.

This is not the place or time to rehearse the trite

story of Outlander grievances and Boer misrule. I have come here to state historic facts, not to plead the Boer case or to excuse or justify Boer policy. I am quite willing to believe that much of it was unjust as well as unwise. I do not doubt that the railway and mining and dynamite monopolies were oppressive, that their Protective tariff almost outdid that of President McKinley; that the education of English children was neglected, as indeed it is in France; that the municipal government of the Rand was as bad as it is in Spain; that the Chamber was open to bribes, as it is said to be in the United States. All this and more may be true, but, as Mr. Bryce justly insists, it gave no legitimate ground for war.

And on the top of this race antipathy, of these bitter memories, of these incessant menaces, of these well-grounded fears, came the Raid; organised by the Prime Minister of a great British colony, carried out by the armed forces raised under Royal Charter, and led by men of rank in the Queen's service. Of this Raid, wherein, as Mr. Lecky says, a Privy Councillor and servant of the Crown organised a conspiracy to overthrow the Government of a friendly State, deceiving the High Commissioner, his own colleagues in the Ministry, and the great companies for which he was the principal trustee, I will not here speak. The Colonial Secretary told Parliament that all this was "a mistake," but that the author of it "had done nothing dishonourable." Mr. Rhodes admitted that he had upset the apple-cart; and gracefully retired from the scene uncondemned.

He ceased to be Prime Minister, but he continued to build Empire, to menace the independence of the Boers, to labour for colouring South Africa pink in spite of Boer, in spite of a Parliamentary majority in Cape Colony, at the cost of our good name and

welfare in the United Kingdom. Mr. Cecil Rhodes is, after all, only one, no doubt the greatest, but the type of groups of keen, ambitious, reckless men who have forced us into war—a war wherein the whole Empire is now being strained to its roots in order to crush some 50,000 herdsmen, whose ancestors for a whole century have struggled to be free from British grip. If I felt free to speak my whole mind, I should speak of it as a new Imperial Raid, carried out in the name of our Queen, under the instigation of a combination of trading syndicates. It would take us too far to consider the justice or morality of these raids, whether Chartered or Imperial, and we might be told that all this was "unctuous rectitude." Rectitude of any kind, it seems, has gone out of fashion. But I am old-fashioned enough to prefer it to unctuous turpitude. And I prefer the name of a just, peaceful, and righteous England to that of an Empire scrambling for half a continent at the bidding and in the interest of cosmopolitan gamblers and speculative companies, in search of bigger dividends and higher premiums.

X

THE STATE OF SIEGE

(1901)

The lawless proceedings of civil and military authorities in South Africa, in colonies in which neither war nor rebellion existed, called out strong protests from lawyers and politicians. But the incredible defiance of law and precedent by the Government at home and the House of Lords raised the indignation to a point which I sought to express in the following statement.

The course then followed by Ministers and the Court of Appeal shook to its foundations the system of Constitutional law as understood in England for two centuries and a half. I am prepared to substantiate every proposition of law here laid down, and I challenge any competent lawyer to displace them, writing with his own name, citing precedents of authority (1908).

"The State of Siege," as understood in some foreign countries, and as it is embodied in the constitution of France, is a thing unknown to the British constitution and abhorrent to the principles and traditions of English law. If the Empire has come to that pass that its welfare demands our submitting to such an anomaly, a change so tremendous should be expressly adopted by the nation and sanctioned by Parliament. To foist it upon us out of a few vague legal dicta, and the loose assertions of Ministers and journalists,

would be treason to the noble history of English justice and English faith in law and freedom.

The question at stake to-day—whether or not the Executive of this country can at will impose "the State of Siege" without control of civil courts, and without being responsible to law?—is a far bigger and more critical matter than any incidental breach of a particular law. It is not even the abrogation of a constitutional privilege, however important. It is the collapse of the whole edifice of constitutional law as understood since the Revolution which swept away the Stuarts. If, at any moment, the Executive, without the assent or knowledge of Parliament, can declare itself despotic, and can suspend and defy the entire body of civil law, and never be liable to give any account in a civil court of justice—then we have gone back two or three centuries to the times of Stuart and Tudor absolutism, and even worse; for the whole fabric of the Constitution, built up by a long succession of Parliamentary and judicial acts, is shaken down to its roots.

The levity and the apathy with which this formidable change in the position of every citizen has been ignored can only be explained by general ignorance of law and the passions roused by the war. There is too much readiness to give any licence to those who are fighting the Boers, and to approve any weapon that can be used against them and their Afrikander kindred. But this is suicidal folly. In flinging overboard in a time of pressure the central principles of British law, we are sacrificing the best achievements of our own ancestors and preparing a novel bondage for our own descendants.

Our civil rights are matters of general principle, which may be insidiously undermined by casual precedents. English law is of that kind that, if you

play fast and loose with it, it vanishes. Defy the principles of liberty under the law, and there will soon be no principles remaining at all. There is but one constitutional law for all subjects of the Crown, where not specially modified by local charter or Act of Parliament. Every citizen within the Empire, of whatever race, is imperilled by the breach of constitutional right in any part of it. What is done in a colony to-day may be done in Ireland to-morrow, and in England hereafter. If the government of the Cape may "declare the State of Siege," assume the powers of Tsar and Sultan, and defy any court of law at home or abroad to question it, it may be the turn of Canada or Australia next—presently of Ireland—and a future Joseph Chamberlain may have another Morley or Harcourt condemned and executed at Aldershot by a captain of horse and two lieutenants of yeomanry.

"Martial Law," unless it means "military law,"—a formal code of rules dealing only with the army and navy, and never applicable to civilians at all—or unless it means "warlike operations" and "military violence," is a mere nickname or slang. The idea that the "proclamation of Martial Law" is equivalent to the "declaration of the State of Siege" under the code of the French Republic, that it gives any legal authority to the civil and military servants of the Crown to exercise arbitrary acts of punishment and restraint of civilians, such as they do not possess under the law—all this is a vulgar error. Martial Law gives no fresh legal right. It is merely *notice* that the armed forces of the Crown are about to take those measures as to persons and property within defined limits which are *directly necessary to repel invasion* and to *suppress open rebellion*. To pretend that this mere "proclamation" confers a legal immunity on the Crown and its agents

to suspend law, to abrogate civil rights, to assume despotic authority in general administration of the country—is a wild sophism. To admit such a right would land us in such a state of society as when the State was seized by some Italian Podestá or some old Greek "tyrant."

The rights and duties of the servants of the Crown, when order is so far disturbed by invasion, riot, or civil war, that soldiers have to act in a military way, are perfectly clear and reasonable. It is their duty to meet force by force, to kill, seize, arrest, and hold all who oppose them, and all who interfere with their own operations of war. Their acts of violence are justifiable whilst they concern direct operations of war, military offences, open resistance or interference with any act of war. Such acts to be justifiable must be both temporary and local; limited in time to a period when invasion, rebellion, or disorder openly exist, and limited in space to the places where such disorder and war actually are found. When invasion and rebellion are crushed, and in places where they do not exist, the pretended "Martial Law" gives no servant of the Crown, civil or military, any legal right to do anything he could not do under the ordinary law, no right to *administer* any district arbitrarily, no right to inflict any punishment on a civilian. Every man, from Commander-in-Chief down to a private, from Viceroy down to a policeman, remains liable to be tried by a jury for any act done *outside law during war or rebellion*, and he is criminally liable to punishment for any illegal act committed when war or rebellion have ceased to exist, and in places where they have been suppressed. This being so, many scores of judicial murders have been committed by soldiers in South Africa, and hundreds of sentences passed on civilians are not only invalid in

law, but expose those pretending to exercise them to criminal process.

This is the certain law of England, laid down for centuries by great lawyers, and established by a series of statutes and judgments. It has of late years been repeated by such authorities as Chief Justice Cockburn, Lord Blackburn, Mr. Justice Stephen, Professor Dicey, and almost every jurist who has treated constitutional law. Professor Dicey was merely repeating accepted maxims when he said in his *Law of the Constitution*, 3rd edition, 1889, p. 265:—

> "Martial Law" in the proper sense of the term, in which it means the suspension of ordinary law and the temporary government of a country or parts of it by military tribunals, is unknown to the law of England. We have nothing equivalent to what in France is called the "Declaration of the State of Siege," under which the authority ordinarily vested in the Civil power for the maintenance of order and power passes entirely to the army.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "It is also clear that a soldier, as such, has no exemption from liability to the law for his conduct in restoring order."
>
> "This kind of martial law [state of siege as understood in France] is in England utterly unknown to the Constitution. Soldiers may suppress a riot as they may resist an invasion, they may fight rebels just as they may fight foreign enemies, but they have no right under the law to inflict punishment for riot or rebellion . . . any execution (independently of military law) inflicted by a Court Martial is illegal, and technically murder."

To the same effect writes Mr. Justice Stephen in his *History of the Criminal Law*, vol. i. pp. 207-216. He, like every lawyer, agrees that the officers of the Crown are justified in any exertion of physical force to suppress insurrection and restore order; but they remain civilly or criminally liable for any excess, and are not justified in inflicting punishment after resistance is suppressed, and after the ordinary courts of justice can be reopened.

This view was affirmed by the Lord Chief Justice Cockburn in his charge to the Grand Jury in *Reg.* v. *Nelson and Brand* (1867). He shows that the common law is the inheritance of all subjects of the realm; that in settled colonies with responsible government, the constitutional rights and statutes of Englishmen obtain. He quotes Lord Chief Justice Hale that civilians could never be tried by martial law. He quotes Coke "that a rebel may be slain in the rebellion; but, if he be taken, he cannot be put to death by the martial law." And he quotes Lord Chief Justice Rolle, who said:—"If a subject be taken in rebellion, and be not slain at the time of his rebellion, he is to be tried by the common law." Lord Loughborough, afterwards Lord Chancellor, said (*Grant* v. *Gould*, 1792):—

> Martial law, such as it is described by Hale, and such as it is marked by Mr. Justice Blackstone, does not exist in England at all. Where martial law is established and prevails in any country, it is of a totally different nature from that which is inaccurately called martial law, merely because the decision is by court martial, but which bears no affinity to that which was formerly attempted to be exercised in this Kingdom; which was contrary to the Constitution, and which has been for a century totally exploded.

It was thought that Lord Blackburn did not entirely adopt the language of Chief Justice Cockburn. What difference of opinion there was turned on minor points. On the main question, he said (*Reg.* v. *Eyre*, 1868):—

> Even if an officer's illegal act was the salvation of the country, that, though it might be a good ground for the legislature afterwards passing an Act of Indemnity, would be no bar in law to a criminal prosecution. . . . The mere fact of good intention, or even the benefit that may have been done, would not be a bar to a criminal indictment.

He held that in a settled colony the settlers carry

the law of England with them. He held that the *Petition of Right* which prohibited resort to Martial Law in time of peace did not *sanction* it specifically, even in time of war. He held that the Governor who kept up Martial Law for thirty days after the end of an insurrection did wrong. And in arresting and sending a prisoner out of a district where civil law was in force into a district under the rule of soldiers, the governor "committed a grave and lawless act of tyranny and oppression."

Now, all these things, for ages declared illegal, have been done in South Africa. The rule of the sword has been maintained, not for days, but for years, in districts where no fighting exists, where the civil courts are open. Civilians have been seized, imprisoned, sentenced by soldiers without warrant. They have been carried off into districts where civil law is not acting. British subjects have been tried, condemned, and executed for treason and rebellion, by troops without any pretence of military codes; and this is murder. Coke said "if a lieutenant execute any man by colour of 'martial law' this is murder, for it is against Magna Charta." In the rebellion in Canada, in 1838, Lord Campbell and Lord Cranworth, then Attorney- and Solicitor-General, advised the Government that when the regular courts were open, there is no power in the Crown to proceed by military courts. A long succession of legal authorities, down from the Civil Wars, have established these principles:—

1. "Martial law," as meaning the continuous government of any district within British dominions by military persons or tribunals, is unknown to our law.

2. It is the duty of all in the service of the Crown to repel invasion, crush rebellion and treason by arms,

and to execute all necessary operations of war. Rebels may be killed in fight, and all who are assisting rebels or invaders may be arrested.

3. It is illegal for soldiers to try or punish civilians for offences triable by civil courts when civil courts are open.

4. Every official remains liable to trial for every breach of law against the person or property of a civilian subject, even if taken in arms, and *a fortiori* of one who has taken no part in the war.

5. Such an official has a good defence, if his act can be proved to be a direct incident of actual war; but of this a civil magistrate and jury are the judges.

6. Nothing but an Act of the Legislature can withdraw from a civil court the cognisance of offences committed by soldiers against civilian subjects of the Crown.

These principles have been flagrantly defied in South Africa ever since 1900; though since 1689 there has been no attempt to set up martial law as a system in England, even during the Jacobite rebellions and Scotch invasions; nor could any lawyer have doubted that to set up martial law, so as to suspend all civil rights without authority of Parliament, was illegal and criminal. Suddenly, by a bolt out of the blue, the Privy Council, under the lead of the Lord Chancellor, himself one of the Ministers charged with illegal action, assumed the power to tear up these settled maxims of the Constitution. He induced the Court to refuse full trial of the petition of a civilian, who, without due proof of any act of assisting rebels, had been seized in a district where order had not been disturbed, where law courts were regularly sitting, and who has been kept in a military prison untried for seven months.

The *obiter dicta* of the Lord Chancellor at the hear-

ing were a surprise to the Bar, recalling a Chancellor in comic opera not the "keeper of the King's conscience." He cited the trial by Military Court of a naval officer, as if that applied to the case of a civilian. He "protested" against a *dictum* of Lord Coke. He professed to think little of Chief Justice Cockburn, and set small store by the case of Wolfe Tone, in Ireland in 1798, on which all the judges and all the text-books have uniformly insisted as a decisive and leading case. He tried to distinguish the case of "foreign invasion" from that of "rebellion" and "civil war." There is no authority whatever for this distinction so far as "the State of Siege" or "martial law" is concerned. On the contrary, the case of Wolfe Tone was itself a striking instance of war and foreign invasion and rebellion together. War was indeed "raging" in Ireland in 1798-9. Finally, the bald and weak judgment, as after six weeks' incubation it was delivered in writing, takes no note of the mass of decisions and authorities which it defies, but professes to rest this vast revolution in the civil *status* of all British subjects on an obscure appeal from an Indian court in 1817, a case which turned on the conquest of a foreign realm, during a state of war, and on the claim to money of a subject of an Eastern despot—a case which no more concerned the constitutional right to liberty of a civilian British citizen in a time of peace than do the proceedings in *Rex* v. *Bishop Gore*.

The case of *Elphinstone* v. *Bedreechund* (I. Knapp, 316) was the case on which the Lord Chancellor relied for reversing Coke, Hale, Blackstone, Campbell, Cranworth, Cockburn, Blackburn, and a host of text-writers and commentators. The case does not seem to have been even mentioned in argument, and, indeed, "it has nothing to do with the case," as the Lord

High Executioner puts it in the *Mikado*. In nine bare lines the judgment in that Indian case decides that what soldiers take as prizes of war from a foreign enemy, during war in an enemy's country, cannot be recovered by an agent of the foreign despot in a civil action during the continuance of the war. What has this to do with the right of a civilian British subject, in a district where peace reigns and civil courts are at work, to be free from arrest and imprisonment by soldiers without warrant or authority by statute?

There seems to be a strange confusion of thought in those who now argue about *salus reipublicae suprema lex*—"the prerogative of the Crown to assert peace and order"—or the *necessity* for illegal action "whilst war is raging." It is, no doubt, the duty of the Crown and its servants to take all or any measures necessary to preserve the existence of the State. This necessity would justify them if charged with unlawful action. But it does not make their unlawful action *legal*. Nor does it withdraw that action (whatever it may have been) from the purview of a civil court hereafter. The Government have occasionally in a panic authorised a breach of the Bank Act. But such breach was not a *legal* act, nor was it withdrawn, before any indemnity statute was passed, from review in a court of law. It was a thing *outside law*, without sanction of law, advisedly committed at peril, though excusable on adequate justification when challenged in law. The captain of a ship might put in irons or kill any of his officers or crew whom he suspected of plotting mutiny. He might run his ship ashore and blow it up to prevent its falling into an enemy's hands. But it is no part of the articles of war for a captain to kill his own men, or to destroy his own ship. These acts are not *legal*, nor can necessity make them legal, nor withdraw them from cognisance of a proper

tribunal. They remain utterly illegal, but excusable on adequate proof of necessity. The acts of Government in breach of law may be morally and politically right, and legally excusable. But they always remain lawless, utterly unprovided for in law, and always open to consideration by courts of law. If not, it is always open to a Government to declare itself despotic—as Louis Napoleon did, or as a Spanish dictator in America does.

The gravity of the present occasion consists in this —that for the first time in the history of our country since the Great Charter the violent assumption of arbitrary power has been declared by a court of law to be *legal*—or at least not open to question by any court of law—those who seize the arbitrary power being declared to be the sole judges of the rights they exercise. If so, it is open to Lord Roberts to make a *pronunciamento* in front of the Horse Guards and declare this country to be a military empire in "a State of Siege." The Lord Chancellor, if sitting in court, would have to hold: "Lord Roberts declares that 'war is raging'; and we lawyers have nothing more to say." Nothing that was done by Strafford or Cromwell, by Laud or Jeffreys, went as far as this. The public takes it quietly, because it is done to Afrikanders at the Cape, and they trust it may help Kitchener to end the war. All this is a delusion. It is done to English subjects, and cuts into the roots of our Constitution. It is a menace to the peace of our own country.

This question is indeed the most vital and sweeping in the whole range of public law, for it concerns the very existence of law itself, not of any particular right. It is the question whether England is a country of constitutional law, or a country in which the Executive of the hour can outlaw the nation, and place

itself above law. If this new claim of outlandish autocracy is admitted—

> 'Twill be recorded for a precedent,
> And many an error by the same example
> Will rush into the state.

There is but one public law, where not specially modified, for all the Britains. All Britons enjoy the same constitutional right which is one and indivisible. And the foundations of this right disappear if, when it is necessary anywhere to appeal to the sword, the only rule is to be—*inter arma silent leges*—nay, too, *silet jus—silent jurisconsulti.* No lawyer doubts that in extreme peril and confusion the servants of the Crown are bound to take all measures to save the State and protect their sovereign. But to tell us that soldiers are to be the sole judges of the necessity, of the conditions and limits of their powers, are never to be accountable to any civil tribunal, are to be what the King is, *i.e.* "can do no wrong," and are judge, jury, counsel, and witnesses in their own case; this is enough to make Coke, Hale, Blackstone, and Mansfield turn in their graves.

During the Gordon riots Lord Chancellor Thurlow said:—

> But the King, any more than a private person, could not supersede the law, nor act contrary to it, and, therefore, he was bound to take care that the means he used for putting an end to the rebellion and insurrection were legal and constitutional, and the military employed for that purpose were every one of them amenable to the law, because no word of command from their particular officer, no direction from the War Office, or Order of Council could warrant or sanction their acting illegally . . . all persons of all descriptions being equally amenable to the laws of the land, and answerable to them for their conduct on every occasion.

In his judgment in the leading case of *Fabrigas* v.

Mostyn, Lord Mansfield thus laid down the law as to the liability of a colonial governor :—

> To lay down in an English court of justice such monstrous propositions as that a governor acting by virtue of letters patent under the great seal can do as he pleases ; that he is accountable only to God and his own conscience—and to maintain here that every governor in every place can act absolutely ; that he may spoil, plunder, affect their bodies and their liberty, and is accountable to nobody—is a doctrine not to be maintained ; for, if he be not accountable in this court, he is accountable nowhere.

Now, if the "State of Siege" is an exotic of despotism, unknown to English law, the "proclamation of Martial Law" gives no new rights to governor or commander ; but both soldier and civilian remain accountable for their acts in civil courts—wherever such are in regular sessions.

No one denies, be it said again, that the extra-legal acts of violence, taken in an emergency and the storm of war, may prove to be justifiable by circumstances and even striking instances of patriotic duty. But nothing can make them *legal* in themselves, nor make the authors of such illegal acts the sole judges of the necessity, and for ever unaccountable to justice. The sinister evil of to-day is, not so much that lawless acts of violence are being done, not that so many public speakers and writers approve of their being done. It is that the Government of the King, the Supreme Court of Appeal, and the first law officer of the realm, dare to tell us that *law* has nothing to do with the matter at all.

Hitherto, it has been regarded as undoubted law that neither the Crown nor its officials can lawfully "suspend" law, or "dispense with" laws ; that where they violate law under an alleged "necessity," they remain liable to justify a *bona fide* necessity when summoned before a civil court. Prerogative, official

immunity, superior order, "reasons of State," "martial law," are in this behalf mere fictions and figures of speech, unknown to English law. The final expulsion of the Stuart dynasty turned on this very claim "to suspend law," to "dispense with" laws. And the *Bill of Rights* was the answer of the nation, which in its first two sections expressly declares the pretended power of suspending law or dispensing with laws to be illegal. Now the *Bill of Rights* and its extending statute the *Act of Settlement* are the constitutional laws which deposed the Stuarts and are the sole title to the throne of the House of Hanover. So that the constitutional party have made our gracious sovereign begin his reign by exercising the despotic power which cost James his crown, and which is forbidden by the very statute to which King Edward VII. owes his own throne.

It was a strange confusion of mind that caused the Prime Minister to say that if Martial Law was not a lawful system it ought to be so made. Well, there is a very simple mode of making it lawful, which is to carry a Bill through Parliament and turn the British Constitution upside down. He might just as well say —"If the Crown has no power to tax without consent, it ought to be given that power, and in the meantime we will take it." Or he might say—"If conscription is not legal, let us act as if it were, for it ought to be legal." This is just what Strafford and Laud, Jeffreys and James II. tried to do. They all said—if the constitution does not give power enough to the royal prerogative, the King must take it—"for the good of his people." And so, the Prime Minister and his Chancellor in effect say—"The King's troops have seized civilians in a district where order has not been disturbed, keep them in a military prison, uncharged and untried; but to talk about *Habeas*

Corpus and civil courts is mere 'legal pedantry,' for the proclamation of Martial Law by His Majesty's officers has now 'suspended' law and 'dispensed with' the Constitution and the rights of the subject!"

It is strange to find the twentieth century thus returning on the seventeenth. It is stranger to see the constitutional party opening a new revolution and providing future weapons for terrorists. Danton and Robespierre insisted that foreign invasion and treason at home were sufficient authority for the party in possession of power to kill those who opposed them, with or without legal pedantry. The majority may turn even here. Those who hold the electorate for the time being fancy themselves exempt from the risks which were run by a Stuart king. But the electorate is fickle. Conscription — taxing food — suppressing trade unions—if pressed home, as some imperialists talk of pressing them, might lead to disorder even here; might end in a civil war and surprising changes in the temper of the people. Why might not a democratic or a socialist majority "suspend law," and laugh at the outcries of the constitutional party, if they ventured to appeal in their own behalf to "legal pedantry"?

XI

EMPIRE AND HUMANITY

(*January* 1, 1880)

The following was a portion of the Annual Address given to the Positivist Society at Newton Hall on January 1, 1880. This was towards the end of the Ministry of Lord Beaconsfield, and about the epoch of Mr. Gladstone's famous Mid-Lothian campaign. It was published in the Fortnightly Review, *February 1880, vol. xxvii.*

Though it is now twenty-eight years old, it is re-issued because in all its essential principles it is now as true as it was then, and because succeeding events have proved how real were the dangers which it deprecated, and how continually the same evils are bred by the Imperialist system.

It may serve to explain the general view of the political world on which the preceding essays and protests were based, and also to show that this political scheme of international justice and morality is the direct result of the religious faith expounded in preceding volumes (*1908*).

EUROPE is still in arms: each nation watching every other with suspicion, jealousy, or menace. The West still groans under that policy of aggrandisement, of imperial ambition and military concentration, which was so fatally renewed by the house of Napoleon;

which has been developed into a system by the houses of Hohenzollern and Romanoff. The crime of December '51 led on by a sure course to the empire of the Corsicans, to military government, to foreign wars, till it awoke by a fatal reaction the military revival of Germany, and ended in the foundation of a new empire of the sword. That empire was the prize won in three successive wars, each one carefully prepared and deliberately contrived, and each followed by violent annexation of territory. The camp at Berlin still arms, still studies new wars, still menaces its neighbours. Worst of all, it fills the air with its spirit, and the sense of foreboding. It fiercely and cynically proclaims that its conquests must naturally lead to a fresh appeal to the sword; and, for its own part, it hardly cares how soon the appeal be made. Berlin almost taunts Paris with waiting so long for her revenge. To the east of Europe, the three Empires watch each other's movements with alternations of suspicion, menace, and intrigue. Russia seizes the opportunity to recommence her old career of conquest and aggrandisement. Italy too has been infected with the same frenzy; and vapours about winning more provinces in arms. And as Lord Palmerston gave us in a policy of self-assertion and of menace a weak imitation of Napoleon's empire, so now our Lord Beaconsfield would catch some rays from the imperial crown of Germany, and parades (against the weak and the uncivilised) a policy of Empire and of War.

For more than a generation Europe has endured the misery of this new imperial ambition. Within that time four new titles of Emperor or Empress have been assumed by European royal families—of which titles two still survive. Within that period six great wars in Europe have been waged, every one of them followed by territorial changes and forcible annexation.

And what is the result? Russia overwhelmed with a military cancer, a prey to a social confusion such as has not been seen in this century. Germany, with her intelligence and her industry bound in the fetters of military service, governed as if she were a camp, as if the sole object of peace were to prepare for war. France staggering under the most tremendous defeats that this century has witnessed, and still not clear of the long agony of her domestic revolution. Italy weighted with a useless army, uneasy, intriguing, restless. Spain still weak from the drain of a series of wars and internal convulsions. England uncertain, divided in action, continually distracted and dishonoured by an endless succession of miserable wars in every quarter of the globe.[1]

Such is a picture of Europe after a generation of Imperialism and of aggressive war. Who is the gainer? Is the poor Russian moujik, torn from his home to die in Central Asia or on the passes of the Balkans, doomed to a government of ever-deepening corruption and tyranny? Is the workman of Berlin the better, crushed by military oppression and industrial recklessness? Who is the gainer—the rulers or the ruled? Is the French peasant the gainer now that Alsace and Lorraine are gone, and nothing rests of the empire but its debt, its conspirators, and its legacy of confusion? Or is the wretched Czar the gainer, hunted like a mad dog? Or the imperial family of Germany, so ominously bound up with the future of the Czar? Or our own Empress and Queen, in whose name patriots and priests are being hung in Kabul? Who is the gainer by this career of bloodshed and ambition? It would be a gloomy

[1] This was spoken in January 1880, at the close of Lord Beaconsfield's ministry; and in the twenty-eight years since somewhat similar conditions prevailed (January 1908).

outlook for those who believe in Humanity, in Progress, in a Future of Peace, were it not that we know this to be the last throes of the monarchical and military system. And we hear the groans of the millions—the working, suffering millions—who are yearning to replace this cruel system, none of their making, none of their choice, by which they gain nothing, from which they hope nothing.

For more than a generation our party has called out that there can be no safety for the West until the grand object of our rulers becomes the peaceful reorganisation of Industry. It has insisted on Peace —the *status quo*—avoidance of all attempts to resettle and redistribute the world: it has protested against the consolidation of all vast states, and above all against the formation of all military empires. This policy, our central policy for the West, has been much more than the mere cry for Peace. We are no simple Peace Society, without a policy, appealing to mere repugnance to bloodshed and waste. Our policy has been an active one, a policy of efficient maintenance of peace. We have asked, in words more earnest and consistent, we make bold to say, than any of the new school of Imperialists, that the weight of England should make itself felt in the world; that our whole power should be committed to maintain a policy; that England should play a great part and speak with a voice of authority in the councils of Europe. Who is a patriot, filled with the high memories of our glorious name, staunch to make every sacrifice to continue that heroic tradition to our children and our children's children to the twentieth generation, if we (whose very religion is regard for our heroic ancestors) are not amongst such men? But our policy has been Peace, the active maintenance of the actual settlement, the protection of the weak, the resistance of the strong.

Nor has it been any knight-errant policy that we called for. Our policy was to use the whole might of our great nation to prevent the outbreak of war, to discourage and, if need be, stand in arms against all violent recasting of the map of Europe, to call round us a confederation of the Powers interested in peace, to strengthen the weak Power menaced, and to defeat the ambition of the aggressor. It is an English, not an Asiatic policy. Who can overrate the power of such a nation as England, had it been consistently and firmly pushed, not in defence of British interests and menaced empire, but in the spirit of Elizabeth, of Cromwell, of William III., to defeat the schemes of aggrandisement from one side or from the other, and to place itself at the head of all the Powers in Europe who seriously desired the maintenance of order? Our steady demand has been for a policy which might give rest and calm to Europe, and turn all Governments from their foreign schemes of conquest to the one work that awaits them—the social reorganisation of industry, and the establishment of a progressive, less centralised, less bureaucratic system of government.

We have protested against the encouragement of any scheme of territorial aggression, however plausibly veiled, and whatever the incidental gain which it seemed to promise for the moment. Certainly we have called out, as loudly as any, for the free development of every distinct nationality, for the free development of the Irish and the Indian races, as well as for the free development of the races of the Balkans or the banks of the Danube. We are against *all* oppression of conquered by their conquerors; we look for the dissolution of these empires of conquest; we desire decentralisation of vast political communities, and not a never-ending system of annexations; and, above all, we protest against military government in

every form. But we protest against it in Calcutta or Dublin, in Algeria or Paris, in Berlin or Moscow, in Rome or Madrid, quite as much as, and even more than, we protest against military government in Constantinople and the Balkans. We do not pick and choose our oppressed nationalities to be favoured with the blessings of self-government. And it may be that, with bleeding hearts and almost overwhelmed with the cry of horrible sufferings and slavery, we may have still to turn aside from fair-seeming projects of redemption, of oppressed Christians in the Balkans, or in Asia Minor, when we find them but the masque of a merciless lust of dominion even more dangerous to the future of mankind ; when we know them to be the signal in Europe of a fresh epoch of conquest, war, and imperial ambition ; when we see them to mean the extermination of one population in the very act of protecting another.

Where might Russia be at this moment, in peace and prosperity ; where would Europe be, if the Czars had followed the course which Auguste Comte urged on their Government more than a generation since : to abstain from all interference with the Western nations outside their own vast dominions, and to devote their power to the social elevation of their half-civilised people ? Again, what a different condition was in store for France, had she set herself to develop her long social revolution by a policy of decentralisation, by freeing the labour of the workmen, by abolishing all spiritual interference in the State, by the simple maintenance of Order with full liberty of speech, of association, of conscience. We who have always insisted that the Government of France must be profoundly republican and essentially social, but still the government of men and not of assemblies or of mobs, are hardly surprised that in spite of the triumph of

the republic, and of Universal Suffrage, all parties in France feel how much is yet to be desired. We, at any rate, have never been superstitious believers in Democracy. We have never thought it was enough to proclaim the republic and then rush to the ballot-boxes. We believe and trust that the establishment of the republic in France is the signal, as it is the evidence, of a new era about to open for the West. But we never shall believe that the future of France is secure, until she has found a Government and men to direct it.

To turn to our own country, we note that the three great questions which are pressing on our people to-day are the three burning problems, of which for a generation Positivism has called for an active treatment—the condition of productive industry, the state of Ireland, the ever-growing Empire.

To-day in the midst of suffering and dejection, as for so many years past in the hour of its prosperity and pride, Positivism appeals to the territorial lords of this soil to recognise how unwholesome and exceptional a system is that on which the agricultural industry of this country is based; a system unknown in any people in the world, in any age in history. To-day, as for a generation, Positivism repeats its appeal to the ruling class in England, in Scotland, and in Ireland, that the sole condition on which the social order of these islands can be maintained is by the systematic recasting of the feudal and semi-military settlement of industry into a social and purely industrial settlement. The ornamental squire, the dependent tenant, the hopeless labourer, are things of the past, of the corruption of chivalry, and of the degradation of industry. We have been told, on high authority, that there must always be three classes planted on British land, and maintained out of the products of its fruits. We

repeat as firmly as ever that there is room in these islands, there is justification in history (I will not say for two classes only) but for two *functions* only—that of the energetic and enlightened director of manual labour, and that of the disciplined and educated workman.

Again, in the hour of gloom, famine, and repression, we repeat what we have claimed for Ireland in good times and in bad times—that she be treated as a substantive people, one of the most interesting of the West, entitled to a Government that shall satisfy her legitimate craving for national existence. Would that we could see the end of this ill-omened and historic struggle to crush the Irish people into the mass of the British people. This is not the place or the occasion on which we can usefully consider the precise scheme—perhaps one may say the indefinite scheme—that is known as *Home Rule*, much less the details of any question of land reform. We who are far from believing that a Parliament of any kind is the panacea of a national crisis, are not prepared to think that the difficulties of Ireland will be solved merely by a Parliament in Dublin.

We are not about to propose—we have never proposed—the erection of Ireland into a foreign state. But we call out now with all the increased energy that comes from increasing acuteness of the evil, not for more bayonets, more suspension of law, more menaces to the Irish people, but for a Government of the Irish people in Ireland, and from Ireland—a Government in the interests of the Irish people, not from the British point of view, or the point of view of Saxonised landlords. The Irish peasant has as good a claim to be protected in the enjoyment of the soil on which he labours, and which his labour creates again, as the corporation or squire who has been imposed upon him as his landlord by a foreign law that he

could not resist. We complain of the mockery of forcing a system of contract, and an alien law of contract, a system of competition and the higgling of the market, on a people who are hardly in the stage of contract or competition at all, who refuse to accept that law, and who are not really free to contract, nor sufficiently independent to compete. By enforcing prematurely a system of contract and foreign law on the Indian peasantry, they are being pauperised and ruined: by a similar process the Irish peasant is driven by millions into exile.

But it is chiefly, in this time of shame and affliction, that we would raise our voices against the revival of the worst tradition of the past—an empire of conquest and domination. We condemn this war in which the heroic Zulu people have been decimated, as evil in every circumstance, instigated by ambition, without a single solid reason, condemned by the very Ministry which in so weak and craven a way has adopted and prosecuted it. It is a war, too, carried out with every circumstance of cruel injustice and insolent barbarity. We condemn it not simply as being an act of unprovoked war, but as distorting and poisoning our whole system of relations with the African races; as laying the foundations of a new African empire of crime and oppression; as kindling the worst passions throughout the fibres of our entire colonial system. We condemn it furthermore on the ground of the exceptional heroism of the people who were its victims, and of the great man who was beginning to form them into a nation. We condemn it most of all because it has blotted out one of those nascent peoples from whom alone the future civilisation of Africa can be hoped.[1]

[1] The Zulu war of 1879 has since been followed by many a similar African war (1908).

The war for the subjugation of the Afghan races, a war almost equally wanton and cruel, presents to our eyes the additional element of evil that it must throw back the task of administering our Indian empire. A war which, to every circumstance of injustice, bad faith, and barbarity, adds the crushing load of exaction wrung from 200 millions of our fellow-subjects, a war by which a military dominion is yet further militarised, religious hatreds are kindled anew, and the race feud, the secular antagonism between conquerors and conquered, is traced in deeper and bloodier lines upon the memory: such a war is a real calamity in the history of England. With all our force we have protested against it; and, again, with all the strength of religious conviction, we call upon the conscience of our countrymen to clear themselves from this portentous offence.

We see in this war another example of the moral dangers with which our whole imperial system is beset; and we have not hesitated to make our voices heard in the special circumstances of bad faith and cruelty with which an unjust war has been doubly stained. Having so recently criticised the particular conduct of the actual operations, we need say no more to-day of the almost unexampled enormity of hanging as rebels and marauders the soldiers and priests who resisted the invasion of an unoffending people.[1]

We who look forward to a human religion can hope but little from the Churches in dealing with this Central Asian crime. The official priests of the old faiths accept without questioning the authorised judgment of the political Government. They are engaged, in obedience to the Primate, in calling upon their God of Battles (can it be, their God of Mercy?) to keep

[1] The Afghan war of 1879-80 has been followed by some similar Indian expeditions, as in Burmah, Tibet, etc. (1908).

the British soldiers—the invaders, the burners of villages, the hangmen of priests—in his good and holy keeping. The ministers of any theological faith are not prepared to argue these national undertakings with the temporal power. The priests of an Establishment accept the worldly policy of the official Government. It will not be so with a human faith. The religion of Humanity has its kingdom in this world, and it is its special privilege to treat the great questions of the age as matters of practical politics with full knowledge, with a close and independent judgment of every argument in the statesman's craft. We make bold to say that Positivism stands alone amongst religions in treating politics from the point of view of politicians, or rather with the knowledge of politicians; because it is an essential part of that religion itself to judge the true statesmanship from the false, and to uphold the principles which lie beneath all statesmanship whatever.

But in a far deeper sense do these distant crimes concern us, more than they concern the theologies of the day. In the religion of Humanity there are no distinctions of skin, or race, of sect or creed; all are our brothers and fellow-citizens of the world—children of the same great kith and kin. Whether they follow God or the Prophet, Christ or Buddha, Confucius or Moses, they are believers in a faith which we profoundly venerate; they are all sharers in the glorious roll of which we would perpetuate the muster. The religion of Humanity is Catholic in a sense that no Christian ever was or could be, for it can include the countless millions who reject Christ, who passionately cling to another phase of religious life, alien and hostile to his. In this very month, which we associate with the memory of Moses, the weeks are associated with the names of all the great prophets and teachers who

maintain the religious life of the East: with Confucius, Buddha, and Mahomet. We embrace them all and honour them all—the great patriarchs and Hebrew prophets and kings; the great founders of the empires of the East, Zoroaster and his Sun Worship, the Theocrats of Tibet, the Theocrats of Japan, the great teachers of China, the great chiefs of the Mussulman world. When these sacred and heroic names are read round the altars of the Christian fanes, then and then only can the religion of Christ pretend to the glorious name of Catholic.

But we of the human religion which we would fain call Catholic—if the word Catholic itself had not been so often polluted—we, whilst the priests of the Catholic world in its decay are calling down official blessings on the heads of those who ravage and kill with no just cause, we can commemorate the sufferings and heroic deaths of tens of thousands of noble men who gave up their lives for their homes and their race in a rude sense of duty to their tribe, men of a darker skin than ours, of a lower type of life, in the mere beginnings of civilised existence, horribly savage it may be, but still our human brothers, our own flesh and blood, fired to the last with high and generous souls. Nor will humanity suffer us to forget the honourable men of our own people who died in this same cruel work in the honest performance of their duty, men who did these things of no choice of their own, utterly ignorant for the most part, themselves but helpless victims of perverse rulers.

No! it is not that we have outlived the spirit of patriotism and care nothing for the bond of country. It is that we earnestly cling to the idea of country, and honour to the utmost the brave men who so nobly maintained that sacred trust. Those who have wantonly crushed the Zulu nation and broken up the

Afghan kingdom are they who have trampled under foot the duty of patriotism. It is for us to insist how precious to the life of the world are these growing aggregates of people when the lofty conception of nation first comes to supersede the narrower idea of clan or tribe. It is we who defend the sacred name of country; it is the invader and the conqueror that drag it in the dust.

Above all, we would make it clear that it is in no spirit of party that we speak. Our horror of these foreign crimes is not bred afresh in us at the prospect of a general election. To those who for a generation have protested against the empire of conquest and domination, it is little comfort whether Whig or Tory be in power, it is little that we hope from a change of party. For a generation we have called out against every extension of our empire, against every fresh act of military or commercial ambition, against the military oppression of India, against the opium wars in China, the wars to break into Japan, against the opium monopoly in India, against the Burmese wars, and the wars in New Zealand, in the Cape, in Abyssinia, in Ashantee, in Zululand, in Afghanistan: and we have called out in vain, whether a Liberal or a Conservative Ministry might chance to be in power. *Quae caret ora cruore nostro?* What race, which hemisphere, what latitude, has not seen the unsheathed sword of Britain? These crimes are the work of the military and commercial aristocracy of England. They are not the special work of Lord Beaconsfield or the party he leads.

For twenty years and more we have sought to make our voices heard when Hindoos were being blown from guns and hunted like wild beasts; when negroes were being flogged and hung in a ferocious and ignoble panic; when Chinese Governments were

being forced to receive a poison, and Japanese Governments were being bombarded into receiving our goods; when African and Asian tribes were being butchered on one worthless pretext after another, the real end being always a sordid lust of new markets. And to us who know all this it seems like a mockery indeed to hear the new-blown horror in some patriots of a war of conquest and aggression.

A party attack upon an unjust war, even a genuine protest against exceptional barbarity, will tell but little in the long run, whilst the governing classes of this nation maintain and defend the system of military empire. An empire gained by the sword, to be maintained by the sword, to be consolidated in the spirit of the sword, an empire to supply the political and military classes with careers, and the commercial classes with markets, to be a source of profit and glory, to be to England of to-day what the West Indies were to Spain, what the Levant was to Venice —an empire which is to be above and outside of all discussion, something that makes everything lawful, and for which everything must be suffered, or committed, or risked—whilst this empire is the foundation of the governing system of the entire governing class, protests against particular crimes are idle words. An empire built up step by step, in blood and fraud, in rapacity and race ascendency, without one thought of morality, or anything but selfish advantage, is not likely to be maintained by mere expressions of goodwill, cannot possibly exist without terrible struggles and catastrophes. It is in vain for a political party to invent a nickname for their opponents, and to call heaven to witness that this new and unheard-of depravity is the source of every national offence. Imperialism is the creed of all who find in the military empire the glory and the strength

of England. And they form the bulk of the official and governing classes, under whichever political chief they are sworn to serve.

To us this empire is something far other, very contrary indeed to the glory and gain of England. It is her grand responsibility and danger. It is an anomaly, a huge excrescence, an abnormal and morbid growth of this fair island and its people. It is the work of that wild orgy of industrial energy that marked the last century, the plunge of an energetic race into a mercantile and colonial saturnalia—much as our neighbours in France plunged headlong into a social and political saturnalia. That empire is a vast collection of distant and disparate countries and races, incapable of assimilation with each other or with us, scattered over the planet in every phase of civilisation, with every variation of history; differing in religion, manners, race, and capabilities. It is unlike every empire that ever existed; unlike the old Roman empire, unlike the actual Russian empire, unlike even the bad old Spanish and Venetian empires—inasmuch as it is ten times as vast and fifty times as complex. Duly and rightly to govern, in the high and true sense of the word (that is, wisely to develop the life and energies of these scattered peoples), would demand the strength, the wealth, the enlightenment, the moral conscience of fifty Englands. Our one England is utterly incapable of this superhuman task. And it is the failure in the attempt that is the shame and rebuke of England.

An empire which, like that of Russia, forms in one territory a homogeneous state, alike in religion, race, law, and manners, has a *raison d'être*, however vast and unwieldy. But an empire which consists of fragments geographically incapable of union; where every fact of race, religion, habit, and feeling makes

incorporation and fellow-citizenship hopeless even in the most distant future; this remains stamped as an aggregate of dependencies and not an empire. But an aggregate of dependencies which is for ever disturbed and menaced, and for ever awaiting or forestalling attack, which contributes nothing to the home government in money, or men, or resources of any kind, is not a strength but an increasing weakness. It must pull down the strongest race that ever trod the earth; and as it pulls them down, it will hurry them from one crime to another.

What can be done is this. The government of such an empire by thirty millions of men in a petty island of the West is impossible. But it may be garrisoned; it may be occupied; it may be held for a few years longer with a hard mechanical pressure, securing external order but repressing all true national life; it may furnish markets; the wealth, and energy, and dauntless heart of our race may keep up the specious fabric for another generation or two, breaking every now and again into further seas of blood, more conquests, more vengeance, ever sliding down the slope of tyranny, cruelty, and panic. But it cannot be for ever. The unwieldy and unorganised mass may break into fragments at any day under internal convulsion or foreign attack. But till that day comes, it may still be held by sheer force of energy, as a source of profit for the moment to special classes of Englishmen, corrupting the true fibre of the nation, and really paralysing it for every duty in Europe and at home. It is impossible to govern this empire, as it ought to be governed, for the sake of its members, or so as to assist in the true progress of our people; it is possible to defend it for a season, at the cost of the subjects who compose it, and at the sacrifice of all that is truly great in England.

England is not herself, whilst she is forced thus to keep anxious and suspicious watch across Africa and Asia over her huge and precarious prize. Our statesmen, our journalists, our preachers come bound to every question of policy and morality by the silent influence of a half-uttered thought—"Come what may, the empire must be saved." For this, they close their ears, and harden their hearts, when black and brown men are being massacred and despoiled; when Cetewayo and Langabalele are shamefully kept in prison, and Theodore and Shere Ali are hunted to death. As a system of slavery prepares the slave-holding caste for any inhumanity that may seem to defend it, so an empire of subjects trains up the imperial race to every injustice and deadens them to any form of selfishness.

And if it hardens our politicians, it degrades our Churches. The thirst for rule, the greed of the market, and the saving of souls, all work in accord together. The Churches approve and bless whilst the warriors and the merchants are adding new provinces to the empire; they have delivered the heathen to the secular arm, and they hope one day to convert them to the truth. An absolute creed, salvation through Christ, of necessity tend to an anti-human work; they forgive the rapacity of the trader; they inflame, instead of checking, the rage of war. Christianity in practice, as we know it now, for all the Sermon on the Mount, is the religion of aggression, domination, combat. It waits upon the pushing trader and the lawless conqueror; and with obsequious thanksgiving it blesses his enterprise.

We will not believe that our sound-hearted people can for ever continue in this career of evil. There is a national conscience; and when it stirs, the most imposing empires totter and break up beneath it.

To us this empire is the great load upon the future of our country, almost upon the future of the world. It can be transformed first and shaken off at last by no political party—by nothing but a religious movement. What slavery and the slave trade once were to our grandfathers here, what a slave industry and a slave society were to the Americans of yesterday, that empire is becoming to Englishmen to-day. A cry of emancipation, as of a religious duty to redress the sufferings of humanity, is rising up here too. Our people have no share in this guilt, as they have none in the gain or the glory. A small band in a religious sense of duty raised their voices against the crime of slavery, and the slave trade and English slavery passed away like a nightmare from our dreams. Again a small band of religious believers and social reformers swore in the sight of men that the slave society should be purged from their nation: and slavery and the slave society are a thing of the past. The strength of the military empire, the fury of its partisans, have nothing to compare with their parallel in the slave system in the Southern States. And where is that slave system now?

We are no fanatics, no blind abolitionists: we claim to be politicians, and even conservative politicians. We have no crude project for abandoning the empire to-morrow like a leaky ship, or handing it over to confusion or chance, as a prey to new conquerors. We will consider all these questions, each in its own field, each *pro re nata*, and with all the data of political science. We do not pretend that the blind conquests of former ages can be resettled in a day, or that we ought to fling off the tremendous responsibilities with which ages of history have burdened us. But this we do say: the heterogeneous empire must be regarded as a passing responsibility,

and not as a permanent greatness of our country. It must be administered with an honest desire to avoid all fresh strife, and the ground of further oppression. To increase its burdens and its limits should be a public crime. To secure peace in it, for peace is its one justification, should be the first of public duties. In the meantime it must be governed in the sole interest of the countless millions who compose it; and not only in their interest, but in their spirit, until the time shall arrive when, part by part, it may be developed into normal and national life of its own.

If this cannot be done, if it cannot be begun at once, would that this huge crime against mankind could be ended by any means. To go on as we do now from one outrage on justice to another, in the vague hope that some day we may begin to do our duty, when all our subjects are perfectly submissive and all our neighbours are perfectly friendly, is indeed mere self-delusion. We can accept neither the selfish plea of national glory, nor the specious plea of a civilising mission. Nothing that England can gain, nothing that the world can gain from this empire, is worth the frightful and increasing price that we pay for it year by year in guilt, and blood, and hatred. We listen with wonder to the alternate cries of indignation which are raised by our two great parties in the State: the one burning to tear to pieces the Mahometan empire in the East, the other breathing war against the aggressive empire of the Czar. Would that they could remember how they and their successive Governments in turn maintain an empire as truly military in its basis as that of Turkey or of Russia; one which gives its subject races as little free national life as is given in the Ottoman system, which engages in more wars

of annexation and conquest than the Muscovite monarchy itself.

This inheritance of empire, we have said, forms for our England of to-day as great a moral peril as ever tasked a great people; yet it is but one of the great problems which surround the future of civilisation. A moral peril of some different kind hangs over other nations too; the lust of dominion, the pride of race, the thirst of fame or gain, fill the air with wars and rumours of wars. Within our social system there rages the struggle of classes, interests, and ambitions; the passion for wealth, the restlessness of want. The future of industry, the cause of education, social justice, the very life of the poor, all tremble in the balance in our own country, as in other countries: this way or that way will decide the well-being of generations to come.

Are these tremendous issues to be left to themselves or chance? Is it enough to say that the spirit of Progress will work them right in the end? Do self-will and self-love ever restrain themselves by an enlightened sense of their own true interest? Verily we think not; and for this reason we are not willing to abandon the greatest and the oldest of all human forces—the power of Religion. On religion, to-day as of old, there hangs the future of mankind for good or for evil.

But if on religion, on what religion? On the religions which by their errors and their failures have brought us to this pass, and now stand aside with their eyes fixed on things above, repeating that their kingdom is not of this world? We more and more need a religion that can deal with this world, which has something to say to the intellectual and social problems of our age, which can show us how to live on earth, not how to prepare for heaven. Can we turn to

Christianity in its latest phase, struggling to adapt its creed to common sense, helpless in presence of our social disorders, and actually stimulating the passion for war and conquest? Or shall we turn to the Deisms and the Theosophies which are even more devoid of social doctrine, more impotent to control our acts, busy with metaphysical ingenuities about the nature of the Godhead or the creation of the world? Far from it. We need a Religion that is neither Mysticism nor Metaphysics, but one that can explain and enforce human duty; which can master men of powerful intellect and commanding character; which can make itself felt on society: purify it, guide it, transform it.

To what can we turn, in our wanderings and our needs, but to the ever-present idea of Humanity as a whole? It recalls us to the sense of fellowship and social duty; it lifts us from our interests in the petty group in which we live, to brotherhood with the incalculable host which peoples the planet; it takes us from the trivial prize of to-day to the cycle of ages that make the past, the present, and the future. The multiplicity of human interests in the mass restrains and humbles the interest of the unit; the vast sequence of time reminds us how we grow ever to a higher state. We set before our hopes the civilising and humanising Power, gathering force in each new age, and steadily advancing to the good and the true. We watch it with our aspirations of to-day back to the wild times of social and religious war in Europe, thence back to the turmoil of the Middle Ages, back as it emerges out of systematic war, out of the inhumanity of the polytheistic ages, out of slavery, out of caste, out of nomadism and fetichism and savagery, out of cannibalism, and so back to the lowest degradation of the human type. Humanity has sufficed to raise

herself, by slow and certain stages, from the brutality of the bushman to the dignity of Shakespeare and Descartes. Much more shall she suffice to free herself from the débris of a feudal and a military epoch.

PART II

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

THE Second Part of this book is occupied with questions of Labour, Unionism, and Socialism, which are now urgent, and promise to be even more urgent in the future. Having been closely associated for forty-six years with the Labour Leaders and with Industrial Reforms, I now collect, in what is largely an autobiographic volume, a few of the Essays and Addresses that I made public on various occasions. These were in no sense casual utterances. Being all based on the Positivist theory of Capital and Labour, which I have held from youth, they have a systematic character. And at the same time they may serve to mark the gradual development of public opinion.

In 1860 I was associated at the Working Men's College with F. D. Maurice and his colleagues, Thomas Hughes, J. M. Ludlow, John Ruskin, Dr. Furnivall, and many others, teachers and students. In 1862 I joined with T. Hughes, R. H. Hutton, Godfrey Lushington, in a public controversy upon the great London lockout in the Building Trades, and I became intimate with the directors of the great Amalgamated Unions. In the following years I visited the northern manufacturing centres, and studied the Unions, Co-operative, Owenite, and Industrial movements of Lancashire and Yorkshire.

In 1867, without my knowledge or consent, I was

announced in Parliament as a Member of the Trades Union Commission, on which I served in the years 1867-8-9; and I drew the Minority Report, which became the basis of subsequent Legislation. The long agitation to obtain a settlement of the laws affecting workmen, together with frequent visits to manufacturing centres, to Trades Union, Co-operative, and other Labour Congresses, brought me into close relations with many working-class leaders, and gave me an intimate knowledge of the working of their societies. In 1885 I organised the Industrial Remuneration Conference, founded by Robert Miller of Edinburgh, of which Sir Charles Dilke was the President, and which was addressed by him, by Lord Bramwell, Mr. Arthur J. Balfour, Lord Brassey, Sir Robert Giffen, Mr. John Burns, Professor Beesly, Professor A. R. Wallace, and others.

As President of the English Positivist Committee from 1879, I continually put forward the industrial scheme of Auguste Comte on the platform and in the press, down to the settlement of the Labour legislation in 1907.

The six Essays in this Part II. deal in turn with the "Orthodox" Plutonomy, which I repudiated in the first volume of the Fortnightly Review *in 1865, with Trades Unionism, and with Co-operation—all three written in the same year. They are followed by the Address given to the Industrial Conference of 1885; by an Essay on the Socialist type of Unionism, 1889; and finally by the Address on Moral and Religious Socialism of 1891.*

This sums up the views on the Labour Problem which I have consistently maintained for upwards of forty years (1908).

I

THE LIMITS OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

(1865)

On the foundation of the Fortnightly Review *in 1865, by Anthony Trollope, W. Bagehot, George H. Lewes, and George Eliot, I was invited by the Editor, G. H. Lewes, to write on the great Iron Trade Dispute in Staffordshire. In the third number, June 1865, I wrote the present Essay on the Limits of Political Economy. It is, I think, the earliest systematic criticism of the entire basis of the "Orthodox" Economy by a student of that so-called "science," who was in close relations with some of its ablest professors, and in complete agreement with many of its theoretic doctrines.*

*The criticism was not at all derived from Carlyle's growls about the "dismal science," nor from Ruskin's sentimental diatribes in his book—*Unto this Last. *My views were based on Comte's philosophic proof that Economic dogmas become both false and mischievous when detached from Social science as a whole. I was myself a member of the Political Economy Club, and was in relations with John Stuart Mill, Professor Cairns, and other eminent economists. I fully recognised the value of many economic researches if kept in strict subordination to Sociology; but I earnestly repudiated the claim to*

erect these into an independent science—much less to make these theories practical rules of society and life.

Now that the old Plutonomy is almost a thing of the past, I re-issue what I believe was one of the earliest efforts to shake off its tyranny (1908).

The "phenomena of society being more complicated than any other, it is irrational to study the industrial apart from the intellectual and moral."—AUGUSTE COMTE.

FOR the evils which beset our industrial system several partial remedies, and but one general remedy, is suggested. Trades Unions, courts of arbitration, limited partnership, co-operation, are obviously remedies both limited in their sphere and remote in their effect. That to which the cultivated public agree to look is the general diffusion of the principles of economic science. It becomes, therefore, essential to know what economic science is; what are its limits; and what are its functions.

Few opinions are more rooted in the mind of our industrial nation than this: that there is a science of production, definite, distinct, and exact—the axioms of which are as universal and demonstrable as those of astronomy; the practical rules of which are as simple and familiar as those of arithmetic. Economists, it is believed, have worked out a system of general truths, which any shrewd man of business can practically apply. We are very proud of our great writers who have created this science, and not a little fond of the skill with which it is handled by newspapers, speakers, and men of business. It is the intellectual feat of our age, the sign of our civilisation, and the cause of our wealth.

But when we come to study the science, we certainly do not find this agreement amongst its pro-

fessors. Agreement is the last thing they think of. There are, indeed, few subjects of human thought on which there is less. There are hardly ten generalisations in the whole science on which all the writers are at one, and that not on the details but on the first principles, not on intricate points of practice but on the general laws of production.

What is the true theory of rent? Who is right about currency? What are the laws of population? Are small farms or large farms best? Does the peasant proprietor thrive? Define the "wages fund." What decides the remuneration of labour? State some of the laws of the accumulation of profits. Give the ratio of the relative increase of population, and the means of subsistence. What are the economical results of direct and indirect taxation? of strict entails? of trade unions? of poor-laws? of Free Trade? Let us suppose these questions asked from a body of economists, and we should have them at cross-purposes in a moment. M'Culloch would expose "the erroneous views of Smith," Ricardo and Malthus would confute each other, and scarcely one would admit the philosophical bases of Mr. Mill. We find ourselves not in a science properly so called at all, but in a collection of warm controversies on social questions. What would be the state of medicine if physiologists were hotly disputing on the circulation of the blood?

No rational economist can claim for his subject the title of an independent and recognised science. He is content at most with systematic dissertations. The greatest of all since the founder of this study in England, Mr. Mill, is, in truth, not an economist at all. He is a social philosopher, who has thought and written on all the chief departments of the philosophy of society, who in his great work deals

with economic laws as part of and subordinate to social laws. Neither in theory nor in practice has this powerful thinker, much less have his profound predecessors, Hume, Turgot, and Adam Smith, ever countenanced the notion that the laws of production, as a whole, can be studied or discovered apart from all the other laws of society, without any reference to the great social problems, by men who have no fixed notions upon them, or none but a few unverified hypotheses; who are without a system of politics, a theory of human nature, a philosophy of history, or a code of social duty.

Unfortunately, this truth has not been generally grasped, and the name of economist has been claimed by men whose qualifications are limited to some acquaintance with statistics and a talent for tabular statements. There has gone abroad, too, under their shelter, a very prevalent belief that economic questions are fixed and defined as no other social problems are. Men who hold the application of theory to politics to be mischievous pedantry, men who regard the science of human nature as an atheist's dream, are quite content to believe that one fragment of it is a science by itself; a science so simple and complete that practical points of detail can be accurately deduced from its rules. A whole literature of spurious economics exists, wherein the postulates of the subject, the great laws of human nature, are gratuitously assumed without a thought or a doubt. The consequence is a tissue of statements about industry which are as true to fact as Zadkiel's almanack is true to events; and a tissue of pretended laws of industry by which selfishness glosses over to itself the frightful consequences of its own passions.

The truth really is (and a very moderate reflection ought to show it), that whatever the difficulties of a

systematic science of society, the same difficulties meet the science of industrial life; that all the cautions which are needed in applying social laws to action cannot be dispensed with simply because the action in question is industry. Secondly, it will appear that the attempt to deal with the facts of production separately from other facts of society can be carried only to a very limited extent, and under very strict conditions. Thirdly, that the attempt to generalise absolutely from certain special phases of modern civilisation is a radical and very dangerous error. It results from the combined effect of these causes that the popular conception of the functions of Political Economy is very wide of its true place both in philosophy and politics.

I

Political economy professes to systematise the laws of production and distribution. It analyses the creation of wealth. It lays down the theory of material industry. It is obvious that every act of production, all industry, in short, is due to an effort of the human will. It forms a certain class of the things that men do. It is determined by all the combined motives which precede action. Men do not labour or accumulate involuntarily any more than they fight or pray involuntarily. In our age we see many men labouring and accumulating under the influence of one leading motive, and we can hardly conceive this motive ceasing to be powerful. But in one bygone age we should have seen them fighting under a dominant motive; in another age, praying under a dominant motive; in another, doing both together under a motive so dominant that few persons then could conceive it less strong. In the ages of faith,

fighting and praying seemed to come by instinct from "immutable laws of society," to be natural results of uncontrollable tendencies. We have lived to see that men can do both or either in the most different ways, under totally different motives, in opposite social states, and indeed can cease in a great measure to do either.

It may be objected that a certain amount of labour and accumulation to satisfy the physical wants of life is necessary in a sense in which no other form of activity is. Men must overcome hunger and cold if they live at all. Doubtless; but the Bushman does this, and so does the Gipsy. The minimum is too small to be worth consideration. All between this and our modern industry is in the truest sense voluntary. For all practical purposes, then, production is only a branch of free human activity; liable, like it, to every modification which altered motives produce. Labour and accumulation might be almost indefinitely increased or diminished, as the motives in which they now originate were stimulated or declined. They might also remain at their present or change to any other level, and spring from a totally different set of motives, and under totally fresh conditions. Man of course is limited by his own physical powers and the general conditions of matter; but with our present intellectual resources these limits are so vast in civilised countries, that, practically, man's industrial life is quite at his own disposal. Production, accumulation, and distribution might be varied almost without limit, both in extent, mode, and proportion, provided we could vary the motives which actuate conduct. In other words, the forms of our industrial life—the laws of wealth, in short—depend on the sum of our actual civilisation.

A truth so simple as this has been so much obscured by economic sophisms that a little illustration may not be out of place. In the first place, no one

who reflects can fail to see how completely our present industry is the creation of our present ideas and feelings. Men produce and accumulate incessantly around us chiefly from the influence of a desire of wealth or useful things. But it is obvious that this desire might very easily become incalculably feebler, and that production and accumulation might be indefinitely less. As a matter of history, we know that in almost every age of human life it has been far weaker than with us now; and that it is only in certain fractions of one race of human kind that it is as strong as it is now. When we compare the industrial energy of an Englishman or an American with that of an Arab, of a modern European with that of an ancient Greek, we can see hardly any limit to the variety of degree in which the love of wealth may stimulate human beings to action. Nor is it even the invariable associate of high intelligence and cultivation. On the contrary, classical and Oriental society abound with examples of high intellectual condition, as religious society throughout the world abounds with examples of high moral condition, with a minimum of production and accumulation. In a word, the instinct and the habit of production are just as variable as human nature.

The second case, that production and accumulation might follow from other than the prevalent motives which now largely stimulate them, is somewhat less obvious but not less true. In vast permanent societies, in long ages of history, populations such as the Egyptian and the Indian, under a strict caste system, have shown an astonishing degree of industry, directly stimulated by habit, social feeling and religious duty, and, in a very slight degree, by personal desire of gain. In religious societies under very different kinds of faith, very active industry, on a scale quite decisive as an experiment, has been stimulated by

purely religious motives. Some of the most splendid results of industry ever recorded, — the clearing of wildernesses; vast public works, such as bridges, monuments, and temples; the training of whole races of savages into habits of toil,—have been accomplished by purely religious bodies on purely religious motives, by monks, missionaries, and priests. In China, in which there is, perhaps, the most universal of all industries, labour is stimulated by motives mainly domestic, partly personal, but in scarcely any degree by the desire of accumulation. In practical slavery, which we must never forget is or has been the basis of a vast portion of human industry, labour is obviously due to other motives than that of the acquisition of gain: in very low cases, to force and fear; in very favourable instances of ancient slavery and modern serfdom, partly to personal affection, partly to habit, as we often see in the domestic animals.

These are the extremes; but between these cases and our own industry there is every shade of motive and spirit from which systematic industry has sprung. We are all familiar with noble instances of labour in every sphere, under all conditions, from which every trace of personal interest has been withdrawn. It would be as degrading to suppose that the great industrial benefactors of mankind, whether inventors, capitalists, or labourers, have been moved by the mere love of acquisition, as that our great intellectual benefactors have been moved by mere motives of vanity, or the practical by mere thirst for power.

Industry has never been so systematically stimulated by motives of religious duty or affection as some other forms of activity in earlier civilisations; but no historical observer would deny that it is perfectly possible that it should be. If any society had been educated for labour with the same consensus of moral and social

forces which trained the early Romans for war, and the Israelites in the desert for worship, we should have had the case of a people in whom industry was singularly developed, and the desire of gain practically extinct. In a word, the studies of human nature and history combine to prove that industrial activity may be organised, and in a great degree is now organised, on moving principles, as various and complex as the character of man himself.

It is nothing to the purpose to object that the case just suggested is possible only under the most singular conditions, and, if possible, is very far from desirable. There is not the slightest probability of our seeing a state of society in which industry should be solely dependent on religious, moral, or social motives. Industry and accumulation might possibly be diminished by any sudden admixture of such motives. Industry, as a whole, might exist where motives of self-interest were supplemented, superseded, and controlled by a range of various motives in almost infinite proportions. We know as a fact that whole societies and races of men have pursued objects far less accordant with human nature than industry, under the influence of complex motives, derived from many forms of human character. We know as a fact that men have given themselves to industry under the influence of every form of it alternately, and of many forms in many combinations. It would be as ridiculous to place industry on the basis of one special kind of the egoistic instincts, or on all together, as it would be to make another of them the sole source of religion, another of politics, another of thought. Human action, of which industry is but a part, is moved by the sum of the human capacities and instincts; and of these such as minister to personal enjoyment are not sole or paramount. Nor does industry depend more on these latter than human life

itself. To hold it to be inseparable from them is possible only on theories of human nature which revive the moral sophisms of Hobbes, or the political cynicism of Machiavelli.

However much these propositions may sound like truisms, it may be doubted if their full meaning is present to those who deal with the labours of Economists, or indeed to Economists themselves. On the contrary, the logical consequences may seem startling to most of them. When, for instance, it is said to be a law of Political Economy that the rate of wages depends on the demand and supply of labour; that capitalists will seek to pay the lowest, and workmen to obtain the highest, possible wages; that capital will seek the market where there is the greatest percentage, and labour the market where there is the highest remuneration,—all that is meant is, that this will happen where or so long as the love of gain, the effective desire of accumulation, the desire of useful things, holds precisely the same relative position in the human motives as it does to-day in England in the year 1865.

The law is gone the moment this position is changed. The law is never in fact absolutely true. This particular motive to labour varies as civilisation varies in every conceivable degree. It is never perhaps wholly absent. It is never certainly exclusively dominant. Perhaps no single case can be found of one capitalist or one workman whose industrial conduct is never influenced by some motive derived from custom, public opinion, sense of duty, or benevolence. There have been cases on the largest scale in which industrial energy has been influenced almost solely by these, or one of these. Precisely as these very variable motives vary in efficiency, industry will be more, or will be less, under the impetus of competition.

The limits of variation in both directions are

almost incalculable. We see it in the difference of one age with another. We see it in the differences of one people with another. And we see it in the differences of one individual with another. If all capitalists were as eager for accumulation as some rare examples are now, capital might be enormously increased. If all capitalists were as little under the influence of acquisitive motives as some whom we know, accumulation might be vastly reduced, other influences remaining the same. Many great employers of labour (such as landed proprietors) are in a very slight degree governed by competition in the management of their estates. Many workmen, as agricultural labourers, are almost solely under the impulse of habit. In parts of Europe men of activity and intelligence are so little under the influence of competition, that markets separated by a few miles have widely different prices.

We all know that in many of our daily dealings we are very largely out of its sphere. The wages of the superior domestic servants are comparatively beyond it. In a great many occupations (as in the public services, arts, and sciences) the influence of competition tells only very slowly and indirectly. It cannot therefore be the sole regulator there. In fact, there is perhaps no single trade in which the force of competition, left without restraint, would not diminish wages. It is also certain that the annals of the human race exhibit competition as a paramount force only in certain parts of Europe in very recent times. These laws, therefore, of political economy depend on an assumption about human character and society, which is totally untrue of the great bulk of human history, and not exactly true of any single community or individual even now.

What is really meant by saying that wages and

profits follow such and such a law, is to state that which is an approximate generalisation of one particular form of civilisation. Of course this can in no sense be a law of human society. If it were, it would be true of all times and under all conditions. The law that the changes of human life depend on the changes of human opinion, is true universally. It is true of the savage; it is true of the child. It is based on a study of human nature as a whole, and of human history as a whole. But it is obvious that most of the laws of Political Economy utterly fail to be realised amongst some savage and some oriental races. Still more signally do they fail if applied to an affectionate family or a pure religious community. There the assumption on which they rest has no place.

The laws therefore are entirely *relative* to the particular state of civilisation. Unquestionably, approximate generalisations, having strict reference to a form of society we are studying, are of great value, —but only on the condition that we never forget their relative character. The laws of political economy are essentially abstract and hypothetical. In them man is conceived under conditions in which he is never actually found, and which indeed could not be actually realised whilst human nature remains what it is. Political Economy professes to exhibit man exclusively as a producing animal, which in fact he never is, and under the influence of special motives, by which he is never exclusively actuated. Social institutions generally, moral impulses altogether, by the conditions of the subject, are excluded. Otherwise Political Economy would be Social or Moral Philosophy. Political Economy, therefore, has two postulates—production as the sole end, Competition as the sole motive—postulates of which the human race and its history can show no actual example.

Without doubt this may be no obstacle to the great value of these theories to the student. The intellectual or the moral forces might be similarly studied. But the great, indeed the sole value of these special studies, depends on their *relative* character being constantly kept in view. It may be asserted, and is no doubt true, that many spheres of industry are so far under the rule of Competition that it may practically be said to regulate them. Broad generalisations may fairly be based on what is the efficient rule. It may be said also that this rule of Competition is the best, the most perfect condition of society, essential to the ultimate happiness of mankind, and destined to be developed indefinitely in the future. It may be. But this is precisely the question which no economist, as such, is able to decide. Both these assumptions are vital problems in the general philosophy of society. This and this alone can offer a reasonable answer.

The economist may be able to decide what is the law of civilisation, what is the destiny of society, what are the conditions of happiness, provided he has satisfied his mind on the theory of society, of history, of morals—of human nature as a whole and human society as a whole,—provided he be a social philosopher, but only thus. The economist may be able to judge to what degree in a particular society competition is a dominant motive; where it is, where it is not paramount; how far it is interwoven with social institutions; what in each case is its relative importance as compared with other influences—provided he has analysed society as well as industry, and has traced the manifold ramifications of human activity—provided he be a politician and a moralist as well as an economist, but scarcely otherwise. Without this knowledge his subject-matter will be liable to varia-

tions which he not only cannot explain, but which he cannot detect. He is working out problems depending on unknown quantities which are constantly varying in relative value. None of his terms are constants or have a fixed power, but they sometimes represent one, and sometimes another; and he has no means of ascertaining when this power is changed.

It is essential to remember that in these industrial problems the unknown quantities are never constant, never regular, and never calculable by the economist as such. He cannot give his solutions in terms of his data, leaving his unknown quantities for after investigation. Throughout every stage of his calculations new quantities may appear, which may, or may not, affect the result. A man may sit down and calculate the law of some branch of industry; he may tabulate laboriously the data of a certain place or time where the rule of competition was almost paramount, and then deduce an approximate result in relation to these data. The tone of civilisation, we may suppose, is changed; a new set of ideas, habits, and principles is introduced (matters wholly beyond the range of the economist)—the law altogether vanishes. When this change occurs, why it occurs, what is its result, are questions to which the economist has no clue whatever. Yet without it his reasoning is a mere exercise in logic. To give it scientific truth or practical value he must have some general conceptions about the unknown quantities—religious, moral, social ideals—about the other motives of human character and forms of human life. In short, he must be guided by reference to civilisation as a whole. In other words, economic researches have neither use nor reality, save as they are guided by social philosophy.

II

This brings us to the objections which Mr. Mill has urged to the strictures of Comte upon political economy. He insists that economic studies can be perfectly well carried on separately; that science has been largely aided by independent investigations into a particular class of phenomena, and by abstract reasoning about a special order of conceptions. He quotes, with approval, M. Littré's (or rather M. Comte's) admirable analogy of the industrial phenomena of society to the nutritive functions in biology. He tells us that as the science of life has been largely promoted by the study of nutrition, hypothetically conceived as independent, so the science of society may be greatly advanced by the study of production conceived in the abstract apart. Now, without defending the attacks of Comte upon economists in general (attacks founded on social rather than intellectual grounds, on their popular influence rather than their logical errors), the answer of the disciples of Comte would be something of this kind: Economic researches may to a great extent be carried on independently, but only as a branch of social philosophy, and therefore not by mere economists.

So far as a general theory of society requires the laws of production to be analysed apart, so far the economic laws are a separate branch of thought. What positivism would condemn would be, that mere statisticians, without any fixed notion of social laws, and without any reference to their paramount effect, should create a body of isolated generalisations. Comte never condemned the use of abstract methods and sustained hypotheses in investigating the laws of production by themselves—on the contrary, he largely uses

these methods himself; but he would insist that it should be done as a branch of the superior science of society. If economists were not all actually social philosophers, the least that would be required of them would be a very clear and strict notion of the limits, the relativity, and the subordination of their study.

The analogy of M. Littré is beautifully just. Unquestionably the nutritive functions can be investigated separately in biology; but only by a biologist, and only as bearing on the science of biology. What would happen if nutrition were to be dealt with by men wholly ignorant of the other functions of life, who hardly believed that they were capable of scientific treatment? Precisely what has happened when statisticians attempted to solve the problems of production. When biology was struggling into life as a science, there were just such a set of specialists, and the chemical theory of nutrition was the result. The views of the pure economist are precisely such a chemical explanation of the nutrition of society. Conceive a science of the Stomach! And a science of the stomach created by men who rather doubted whether there was such a thing as a nervous system, men who had vague ideas about the circulation of the blood! The theory of digestion can be roughly sketched without much reference to the general system of life; so can the theory of production be sketched apart from the general social conditions. The chemical and mechanical processes in digestion may be analysed and reduced to a system; as may also their chemical and mechanical results. They can be even reproduced and imitated partially.

The laws of production can likewise be systematised so far as they depend on the simple rule of competition, and their results may be systematised so far as this rule can be supposed universal. But this

economic theory is not the true theory of production any more than the chemical is the true theory of digestion. Digestion never in the living frame takes place in purely chemical ways, and production never in the living society takes place under the sovereign rule of Competition. A theory of digestion and of nutrition we may have, but only when the theories of the nervous, the vascular, and the glandular systems are complete; only from men who can grasp and trace the complex combination of all in compound processes; who have watched the action of nerves on secretions, of blood on nerves, of gases upon blood; who know how fibre is added to fibre, how laminæ of bone are deposited around their centres; who can conceive the living organism; who know life as a whole.

Once, in the infancy of thought, men poring over a few dry bones may have fancied they could build up out of them at least a theory of the skeleton by itself. They little thought that no rational osteology could exist until a theory of the blood had been mechanically, chemically, and biologically established. So too, men, in some charnel houses of society, have built up out of the dry bones of the social organism a crude theory of production on the mechanical basis or Competition. A true theory of production we may have one day; but only on the completion of the various constituents of the social science; when the play of human motives and the order of the human instincts is definitely solved; when the Social Organism is known as a whole, and is felt to have a single and intelligible life.

Mr. Mill's great work itself is a cardinal proof that if the facts of production can be separately analysed, it must be by the guidance and aid of a social philosophy. He is not an economist, but a social philosopher; and

his Political Economy is simply a branch of his general system of Society. A large portion of his treatise is occupied with reasonings which are strictly political; and there are no portions more impressive than those which are strictly moral. His views rest upon doctrines respecting human character and institutions which he has systematically expounded in all their leading branches. His theory of industry is scarcely conceivable by one who has not mastered his general theory of life. He is far from confining his view to the actual forms of industry. Production, as he conceives it, would rest on social and moral changes vaster than those which separate the middle ages from ourselves.

It is hardly recognised yet how grand a transformation of society underlies these apparent economic theories. There are two great questions which so pervade all industry that there is scarcely an economic problem into which they do not vitally enter. These are Population and Immovable Property. How far do economists and the public adopt the theories of Mr. Mill on Reproductive Abstinence? Yet it lies at the root of all his doctrines on Industry. What economist and what politician accepts his view that landed property in England is far from fulfilling the conditions which render its existence economically justifiable, and that in Ireland it does not do so at all? Yet the value of a great part of his industrial laws depends on this, which rests on an axiom in the general theory of social life. Mr. Mill's speculations on population and landed property are important chiefly because they rest on profound moral and social truths. But what would be the value of the speculations of a mere statistician who had no such guide and no such preparation? And who among statisticians has?

There exists an entire literature on the subject of population, from which moral causes are as effectually excluded as if Man were a form of aphis. But moral causes are almost decisive in questions of population. Theoretically, the population of the world in a few generations of unlimited breeding could stretch from the earth to the moon. Theoretically, if the human race was in the religious condition of St. Bernard, it might cease with the actual generation. Every variation in population between these scarcely conceivable limits is due to moral, political, and social circumstances, and in a very minor degree to physical. Yet these variations are our important data. The effect of population is the one cardinal quantity in every economic problem. What then is the rationality of economic problems without a general theory of population? But a theory of population is essentially a domestic question. It is vitally a question about Family. The form of marriage, the position of women, the moral duties of the pair, purity, continence, are certainly the primary theories to be established. Without these, theories of population may be constructed in the abstract; but they cannot have much practical utility. Theories of locomotion might be constructed in the abstract; but they would not carry us far if the theorist paid no attention to the fact that the medium of motion might be either earth, air, or water.

Few economic problems have been more debated, or are more important, than that of the cultivation of land. The systems of peasant proprietors, of landlords, of farmers, of métayers, of cottiers, form a singular instance of a ground where economists contradict each other not only in their conclusions, but as to the facts from which they reason. But there is a question which underlies the whole problem, which

is the social ground of property and the appropriation of land. No one does, no one can treat this fundamental political principle as a purely economic question. The first thing a rational philosophy has to do is to establish the basis of Property; the rights, the duties, the relations of proprietors; the political, social, and moral functions which ownership in land implies. Before this is done, or at least unless this is done also, what is the use of the mere economic side of the question? It is, as we have said, the mere digestive side of an organic problem of health. Economists have pretty well proved that a very good cultivation is attainable economically under any of the land systems. They recommend one rather than another for political, social, and moral reasons. A large portion of Mr. Mill's treatise, at any rate, is thus occupied. But it would not be of the slightest value unless he were at the same time a profound student of political, social, and moral truth.

When it is said that the rule of competition and self-interest is so far practically the rule of modern society as to be a sufficient basis for economic laws, it may fairly be asked if these two great elements of Population and Property — one of them dependent mainly on moral standards, the other on political institutions—do not radically affect every problem in turn. Every other element of economy may be shown to be largely under the influence of some moral or some social force. But the economist excludes these from his inquiries. What he does, therefore, is to isolate for study a special class of complex phenomena, and then to isolate for his explanation of them a special class of the conditions on which they depend. The relative force of the other phenomena, and that of the other conditions of all the phenomena, remain all the time variable but

unknown. To assume that they are fixed, to assume them of a certain force, to assume them to be small, is simply to assume the problems which lie at the root of human society. The economist has not only a special class of facts to deal with, but he has to refer these to a special class of causes. An astronomer might find it convenient to work out the law of the centrifugal tendency of the earth ; but a mere calculator could do nothing of the kind. And assuredly the astronomer would not do so unless the centripetal tendency were a known or certainly a fixed force.

When, therefore, the economist lays down a law respecting wages, for instance, based on modern civilisation and competition, or on anything but laws of human character and society, what he does comes to this : He states a proposition about human action which can only apply to states of society with habits and institutions exactly like that before him, and which would be true of that particular state of society if mankind acted upon certain special motives, which they never exclusively do. Truly a somewhat conditional and hypothetical law ! Very useful possibly to the social inquirer, but of small value to the man of business. A powerful and universal moral stimulus might, it is conceivable, dispose all capitalists to give just the same labour and care to their business as they do, and yet consume of the profits no more than a common labourer. They could then, if they pleased, increase the wages of labour largely, population under moral restraint not increasing. A powerful and universal political stimulus might also dispose all labourers to force them to do so, and, in fact, make the capitalists the serfs of the labourers. In either of these cases, and they may be approached in infinite degrees, the law of wages would cease to apply. Nor can the economist give us the slightest test as to

when this tendency might begin, what would cause it, what could stop it—whether it is good or bad, whether it is general or partial. All that he can give us is the following :—The actual rate of wages now and formerly, *some* of the causes on which they depend (value unknown), and what wages would tend to be if something happened which never happens.

It is quite true that there is a certain order of industrial questions which are in no degree affected by variation of motive. The purely physical analysis of capital, labour, production, and accumulation is true of every body of men in all ages, of a single family, and of a horde of savages. These are the fundamental conditions of all material efforts, and are closely dependent on physical truths. These, therefore, are true laws of society. So far political economy is a branch of an independent and a real science. But no farther. Such laws as are wholly free from the influence of moral causes can be exactly stated whilst the moral forces are unknown. Such laws as refer to subjects which are affected by moral causes (the influence of these being unknown or neglected) can be nothing but hypothetical. But these true laws of production are very few and very general. They are rather the axioms and conditions of the study than the theorems. They occupy in Mr. Mill's treatise only about one-third of the first volume. They are of deep interest to all who think about society, but they are general philosophic analyses, which are of small practical value, and are scarcely understood by the public. These are not the economic laws to which men appeal as the true guide of life. The Political Economy which really acts upon men's minds is the Economy which is concerned with Distribution. It is the laws of Distribution which men seek to know and to enforce. But into all of these the moral and the

social forces, motives, institutions, habits, invariably enter. To the economist, therefore, the laws of Distribution are purely hypothetical, and consequently have a theoretic but no direct practical value.

III

We are now in a position to define the limits within which political economy can be pursued as an independent study. In the first place, so far as physical conditions go, and up to the point where moral conditions begin, strict scientific laws can be established. These answer exactly to the chemical conditions which limit the study of the nutritive functions, or the mechanical conditions which govern the laws of gravitation in physics. But even here it must be remembered that the value of these economic laws depends on the truth of the physical premises. The economist will be unable even to analyse the formation of capital, or the results of labour, or the conservation of wealth, unless he have the requisite knowledge of physics, of vegetable, of animal life. Directly the data of the study become affected by moral conditions, the conclusions of the economist as such cease to be scientific laws, and are only hypotheses. Whether these hypotheses approach reality, whether they can be of the slightest use, can only be determined by a systematic study of the moral conditions. That is to say, the test of the rationality of these speculations is that they be *relative* to social science. They may be carried on independently to any extent which this science may require, but they can only be carried on reasonably under its constant guidance. It must be done, as Aristotle would say, ὡς ἡ πολιτικὴ ποιήσειε καὶ πολιτικῶς. It is legitimate in the

hands of the social philosopher for the purposes of social science.

Under these conditions it is of great importance that these speculations should be produced. But being hypotheses, they are of no practical application. To pass from true abstract laws of society to practical injunctions is the most arduous task of the intellect. To pass to them from limited hypotheses would be raving madness. Every science uses such abstract fictions with advantage; but it never applies them to practice. A physiologist might find it desirable to consider the body from the stomachic point of view; to throw aside all organs but one, and to conceive the human frame as a simple belly. But his labours would have little practical use except to a community of Amœbæ. In early stages of a science these fictions are wonderfully suggestive, as were the circular hypotheses of planetary movements, and the historical cycles of Vico. In the maturity of a science they are powerful instruments of reasoning, as the hypotheses of variation in the theory of development. But until the other branches of the science are similarly advanced, and the rest of the conditions equally understood, their value is altogether doubtful. To pursue them by themselves is mere waste of time; to systematise them apart is pedantry; to promulgate them as realities is a crime. The business of the specialist is with facts, not with hypotheses. If he thinks that good can come from the crude registration of phenomena, from practising imaginary calculations on fragmentary data, let him be careful that no man look on these undigested tables as true generalisations; that society be not poisoned by mistaking his idle hypotheses for absolute laws.

There is another condition which it is essential to remember. The higher the nature of the subject, the

more complex it is. The facts of society are, therefore, more closely interwoven and dependent on each other than any other facts. The abstractions which are easy in astronomy are less so in chemistry; they become difficult in biology; they are often impossible in sociology. The ramifications of society are more intricate by far than those of the body, the multiplicity more wondrous, the balance of functions more delicate. Strange as is the harmony of the physical organism throughout every organ and system down to the microscopic cell or nerve-fibre—making all one life—it is nothing to the unity of the social organism in its infinity, its sympathy, its variety; wherein each individual soul, each individual fibre of each soul, takes and gives its share in the common being.

There is a second consequence. The more complex are the phenomena the more they are modifiable. And of all, the most modifiable are the social. The variations of society in the past seem infinite. *They are no less infinite in the future.* There is no institution and no instinct which has not varied vastly in influence, in form, and in relative importance. Every variation in each institution and in each instinct tells upon the whole society. Each variation of the whole society tells upon each institution, and each instinct. The possible combinations are simply infinite. When, therefore, we isolate for study one institution or one instinct, or a set of institutions and instincts, in the midst of this complex variable whole, we are dealing with one combination where the possible combinations are countless; we are working out problems with the knowledge of a perturbation in our subject, where the perturbations are known to be infinite in number and in force. So a worm might study the influence of climate on vegetation!

Now it is this amazing interdependence of the

social forces on each other, and their no less amazing capacity for adaptation, which the popular conception of Political Economy most completely misconceives. Amidst forces and conditions infinite, the effect of one on the whole is never paramount. Each force may be stimulated, neutralised, modified to an indefinite extent. Very similar results may follow from very different conditions. Almost similar conditions may lead to widely different results. The thing has been done constantly in politics. In this age, the saturnalia of specialists, pedants are continually giving us theories of the effect of this or that institution, and show how the welfare of nations depends on a representative chamber or a free press or adult suffrage. We are getting to feel that the welfare of nations depends on a healthy social system which is the sum of a multitude of moral and social forces. We have yet to learn that the wealth of nations itself depends on a similar aggregate.

It might be possible and useful (in reason) to work out a theory of several special instincts. The destructive instinct has been in some ages more entirely universal, more dominant, and more independent perhaps, than any other. There have been ages when a man might possibly have thought that the business of Destruction was so nearly identical with human activity, and the instinct of Destruction so far paramount, that no other was worth considering. We can imagine a science of Destruction, or the laws by which men did, do, and must destroy each other, based on the assumption that man acts exclusively on the destructive instinct. This science, its laws and its postulates, would have been more real in early Rome or at least in modern Dahomey, than the science of Production on the postulate of the selfish instinct is now in Europe. The obvious objection to such speculations

would be that man had so many other capacities and instincts besides those of destruction, and that again destruction itself called out so many other capacities and instincts beside the destructive, and that all these so crossed and modified each other, and made up one human life, depending on one human character, that the speculation was utterly chimerical, not to say demoralising. Production is far more reasonable than Destruction, and the desire of getting material comfort is, perhaps, superior to that of destroying one's fellows; but the scientific error of singling these out of human life and motives is almost as great, and only less debasing.

Mr. Mill protests against economists being made liable for the belief that the facts of production are not in human control. No man certainly could think of suggesting that he was liable to the charge—he, to whom England largely owes the true conception of social laws. To Mr. Mill we owe the knowledge that the facts of society are more modifiable than any other, and are so precisely in the degree in which we know their laws. Nor in any line of his writing is this truth forgotten. But it may fairly be asked if economists as a body adopt this view; if any one of them conceives it as constantly and fully as he does. Unquestionably this is not the notion of the public. In newspapers, pamphlets, parliament, and conversation, it is repeated continually in a confused and uncertain form, that the facts of production and accumulation are beyond human control. It is not meant by this to point to the limiting conditions of all production, but the special modes of distribution. Let these ignorant workmen be told, we often hear, that wages and profits depend on immutable laws, and cannot be varied at the will of employer or employed. Wages, profits, population, consumption, and accumulation, every branch of economy in turn, is

treated by the public as if fixed by nature in permanent proportions.

Within their own vast limits they are variable to any extent. Change the ideas, the moral tone, the habits, and all is changed. Yet this degrading fatalism (as false and as deadening as Calvinism itself) is seized by a materialist generation as an excuse for giving free scope to its greed, just as it is seized by orientals as an excuse for indulging their sloth. It may be that Economists as a body have never propagated this monstrous paradox; but some of them distinctly have fallen into it, and as a body they have stood by and have never raised their voices against this general perversion of their teaching. If they have not taught it, they have countenanced it by silence. Their teaching gave birth to this delusion; it was theirs to dispel it. None of them have done so but Mr. Mill and some of his followers, and that because they are not mere Economists.

It may fairly be asked if the fact of an elaborate system of economic laws, based on partial data, is not itself a proof that whatever they professed, the economists believed very little in the voluntary modifiability of society. What is the use of a vast body of generalisations based on a special set of conditions, where the conditions may vary indefinitely? The number of such possible bodies of laws is infinite. There may be a million systems of Political Economy besides the one we have got, all just as true if we allow their data. What is the use of one more than another, unless we suppose some one of the sets of conditions permanent? The actual economic laws are certainly not true now, never can be true, and in the progress of civilisation may become less and less true indefinitely. Let it be supposed, however, that they bear some relation to an actual state of society. But what if

the actual state of society changes, what is the good of them then? We should want another set in relation to that change, and so on. Every social system might have its own economic laws.

The Socialists, the Communists, the Mormons, nay, the cannibals, not to speak of every social system in history and throughout the world, might have its own economic laws. The Economists have absolutely no scientific answer to Communism. They take one special instinct; Communism takes another. Every social state that ever existed, or that could exist (and they are infinite), might have its own economic laws appropriate to its conditions. In a religious fraternity the postulate would be the love of God, and the only Competition would be to get the least wages and the least profits. What, then, is the use of an elaborate body of deductions, until we have agreed on the conditions from which they follow? These deductions, that is to say, the economic principles, do not directly affect the conditions—that is to say, the social state; but it directly affects them. When we have got the social state we want, or at least conceive it as a whole, then we can build up useful deductions from it. To build the deductions on any conditions is to assume them more or less permanent. *Yet all reasonable social inquiry now proceeds on the ground that the social state requires much improvement.* That which can improve it must be something which affects the social state, and this Economic deductions do not, or do most superficially. Political Economy, therefore, as an elaborate body of practical principles, rests on the assumption that the social state is practically not capable of improvement. Directly it is improved, new Economic principles will be needed.

A school of thinkers, with an entire literature, and vast social and political influence like that of the

Political Economists, must be held responsible for the social and popular results of their teaching. A body of political writers who undertook to systematise the laws of government on the assumption that men crave only for place and power, and who rigidly excluded from their view questions of religion, education, morality, society, and industry—who confined their views to the Georgian period of the British constitution, and neglected all history, and all the rest of mankind—might construct a science of the British Constitution, and a number of hypothetical laws of politics, including the laws of rotten boroughs, of bribery, patronage, and place-hunting ; they might give us calculations of the bribes that must be given and the jobs which must be perpetrated (hypothetically), and how a seat in parliament depended on the number of voters to be purchased compared with the length of the candidate's purse. But such men could hardly complain if they were accused of lowering rather than elevating political morality, of systematising corruption, and reducing venality to a science. It is in social and moral affairs that this partial method of inquiry is so frightfully dangerous. Moral systems on narrow bases have constantly depraved an entire generation.

We know the disastrous effects which moral theories of the supremacy of the selfish instincts have at times exercised on society. Yet Political Economy has, as its postulate, not the predominance merely, but the exclusive supremacy, of one of the selfish instincts. There was once a very remarkable instance. One of the acutest of men, Machiavelli, studying one of the corruptest of human societies, once conceived the idea of reducing politics to a system, on the assumption that men simply acted for their own interests (the very assumption of the economists). He drew up a wonderful body of generalisations closely

related to the special society and logically true to his special assumption. His "Prince" is a sort of Bible of Political Vice. It was not really true to his facts, nor was his assumption literally true, or Italy would have realised its poet's "Inferno." But it was sufficiently true to exercise a frightful effect on his contemporaries. Nor has it availed him and his apologists to insist that his theories entirely rested on an hypothesis which he did nothing to recommend; that the assumption was fairly near the truth where he wrote; that he was only a political thinker analysing the phenomena of society. It has not availed to save a man of many noble principles, a martyr to his faith, from being a by-word for cynical wickedness. The social body, even less than the physical, cannot bear those crucial experiments of scientific inquirers.

IV

We may now sum up the various conditions which limit the study of the facts of Production. The first and the radical condition is that it be simply a branch of a general system of society. As worked out by a master of the social laws—by men like Hume, Adam Smith, and Mr. Mill—the study is of great value. But even then it will be marred by the failings and the errors of the social theories of which it is a part. It cannot be more real or more useful than they are. Secondly, that portion of its doctrines which depends not on human motives but material conditions (the laws which govern the production of a soap bubble as much as a steamship) may be taken to be true really and always, so far as the material data are scientifically right. All that portion into which human motives enter is real only so far as the whole

range of motives is studied; and inasmuch as the whole body of other human acts is omitted, is real only relatively to them. In this portion, the bulk of ordinary economy, there is but one rational predicate —"*is*." But such words as "*Ought*," "*must*," "*will be*," never can appear in its formulæ. Thirdly, its doctrines are purely provisional and ephemeral. Its data being the forms of our immediate civilisation, it has no bearing beyond it. It has no historical truth, and therefore no future value. It had no meaning in the thirteenth century; and may have none in the twentieth. Fourthly, the application of these formulæ to life, from the fact that it neglects time—and in most relations of life time is all-important—and from the extreme complication of the subject, is of all intellectual tasks the most difficult and hazardous. To navigate an ocean with a knowledge of one wind or one current alone is nothing to it. It may lure a nation to ruin, and demoralise it in the process.

It being understood that these generalisations never have absolute truth, and rarely practical value, we may add some tests that these limits are observed. The more systematic and complete are the social principles on which they rest, the more valuable and sound will be the economic deductions. They grow less and less so, the less this subordination is recognised. The more the economic generalisations are correct historically, the more likely it is that they conform to human nature. What is true of all societies and times, is probably true altogether. The more the special economic facts are independent of general institutions and habits, the more easy they are to be isolated and calculated. The more they depend on special motives, the more accurate will be the analysis. The more temporary the human relation or effort they involve,

the easier they are to explain. The more they depend on special and highly artificial processes, the more independent and accurate the laws. Prices in market overt, currency, bills of exchange, monetary practices, insurance, restrictions on trade, taxation, form subjects more or less capable of accurate generalisation and very valuable principles. Man as a responsible moral being, human life as a whole, is less directly affected. But wages, profits, accumulation, consumption, population, poor-laws, land-systems, partnership, tenancy, trade-unions, co-operation,—these are things which involve the great human instincts, wants, and institutions; and they are for the most part beyond the reach of a mere economist. He can deal with the shell, not with the kernel of life, for of permanent human relations and forces he knows nothing. But what does this list of tests show but this?—that with the trivial forms of existence Economy can do something; with the greater, nothing—that it can only deal with these as it widens into Social Philosophy.

No doubt the bulk of the ordinary economists have a sort of social philosophy, a general theory of society. But it is one which they very loosely conceive; and would be quite unable to prove. It is certainly one which the public who follow them, in its naked form most sternly reject. Most of them are more or less conscious adherents of that perverse phase of Benthamism which places the roots of morality in the selfish instincts, and the basis of society on absolute non-interference. With the moral doctrine of self-interest and the political doctrine of *laissez-faire* (vaguely understood) the pure statistician thinks himself prepared for investigating production.

But the authors of these principles were not specialists. Their theories of self-interest and individualism were based on systematic education, on

thorough moral training, on entire social reconstruction. To leave all these to take care of themselves is to seize on the mischievous side of their doctrines alone. To Bentham self-interest meant a very cultivated sense of duty ; to the economist it means a gross personal appetite. He said, Let government cease to force, so that men may be educated to justice. The economist protests against interference, so that the instinct of gain be unchecked. If his general principles are right, they remain to be proved. That they be true, that they be complete, that they be systematic, is all essential. They are what physiology is to the physician, what a creed is to the priest. If these moral and social problems yet await a decision, they must be judged in themselves, not insinuated in a body of practical rules of life. In the meantime it is intolerable that in the innocent form of a scheme for increasing our comfort, society should be saturated with principles which philosophy condemns as radically false, and the moral sense rejects as profoundly degrading.

Is it that no social philosophy is needed ? *Is it that we need only to know how to produce more—not how to produce in a more human way?* Does industry need no correcting, purifying, guiding ? Are there not things in it which make feeble souls look on material progress as a curse ? Are there not quarters in our big cities where two children die in place of one—twenty thousand, where ten thousand might have been saved ; where sucking infants are drugged with opium, and farmed at nurse by a hag by the score ; where amidst arsenic and brimstone fumes the jaws fall out, the bones rot off, lungs choke, and youths and girls die faster than in Mississippian swamp ? Are there no "works" reeking with cruel blots, where toil is endless, foul, and crushing,—where the rich man's luxuries are elaborated by disease and

death,—where unsexed men and women live the lives of swine,—where children are worn, maimed, poisoned as in a "limbus infantium,"—stunted in soul and limb, polluted and polluting? Are there not trades where the safeguards against death are forbidden, that lives may fall and wages rise? Are not each year one thousand lives lost in coal mines, "chiefly from preventible causes"? Are there not our million or so of paupers whom neglect leaves sometimes to fester to death,—sometimes to die in parturition. Are there not gangs of women and children driven from farm to farm by an actual slave-driver? Is there not our rural labourer, the portent of England, without hope or energy; plodding wearily through life like his ox?

And where such abominations are not, is there not amidst the healthier forms of labour a deep class feud, and spirit of strife, sweeping across our modern industry, as the plagues and famines of the later middle ages swept over Europe,—gigantic outrages and strikes, shaking the fabric of society, and threatening its very institutions; on the one side a wild sense of wrong, on the other a raging desire to be rich? These are the evils we see, and for which we need a remedy; evils of moral, social kinds, coming out of rotten systems of life and ungovernable passions. And they tell us that the cure is to be found in a knowledge of Political Economy—*in the study of hypothetical laws, which would be true if all men followed their selfish instincts.*

We need indeed a social philosophy. If one instinct can be reduced to a method, others can. If one form of activity can be systematised, all the forms and life itself can. Where are the laws of Production on the hypothesis of Duty? Where are the principles of morality and sociality: of good-feeling, of equity, of protection, of good faith, of self-denial, as applied

to Industry? Where is the science of popular education? If there be a science of the Acquisitive instinct, we need one much more of the Protecting instinct. If these have not been done, it is because so great a part of modern intellect and study has been absorbed in analysing one phase of life and one instinct of the soul—a phase the most obvious to specialise, an instinct the most dangerous to isolate.

II

TRADES-UNIONISM

(1865)

The following is part of an article published in the second volume of the Fortnightly Review *under the editorship of Mr. George H. Lewes.*

After the great lock-out in the Building Trades of 1862, the writer had been in close relations with the secretaries and committees of the chief Unions. He had also often visited the Unions at Leeds, Manchester, Bradford, Halifax, Rochdale, Sheffield, and Nottingham. During the Cotton Famine, together with the late Sir Godfrey Lushington, he conducted a personal inquiry into the condition of the Lancashire operatives' societies of all kinds. He had also written much in the Bee Hive, *and other workmen's organs, and afterwards in the* Pall Mall Gazette.

Although this sketch of Trades-Unionism is now more than forty years old, as it was founded on personal knowledge of the societies and on intimacy with many of their managers, there is no reason to change, or even to qualify, the principles here insisted upon—principles which the whole evidence laid before the Trades Union Commission of 1867-9 *amply justified—and which have since been adopted by the legislature* (1908).

Of the features of our industrial system, none is more

important to study than that most significant fact—the institution, growth, and power of Trades-Unionism. It is in reality the practical solution of all labour questions, to which the labouring classes cling. Right or wrong, it is their panacea. It is in many ways by far the most powerful element of our industrial system that has been yet organised into an institution. It thus goes to the very root of the most vital movements of society. It is not too much to say that the whole political, practical, and organising energies of the working class are now thrown into it. If reform bills languish, and agitation lingers to awake, it is because they are absorbed in industrial rather than political leagues. No one can suppose that the existing dead calm and indecision in the political sphere really represents the practical instinct and energy of Englishmen. It is not so. Our real public movements and struggles are industrial. In them powers of will and sympathy are being exerted as keen as ever thrilled in our hottest political convulsions. Of this movement the heart and centre — the club-life — the associative, initiative, and reserve force, is Unionism —a force, on the whole, of which the public should know the whole truth—and nothing but the truth.

I. The first thing is to recognise the extent and importance of the movement itself. For all general purposes the unions can count upon the support and contributions of at least an equal number of the workmen who are not regular members of the society. Their "war-footing," it may be said, is about double that of their peace establishment. For all practical purposes, therefore, the unions may be taken to represent the available strength of the whole skilled body of artisans. Nor are these recent or precarious

associations. Most of them have steadily increased in numbers, income, and extent for the last ten or fifteen years. Trades in which the most obstinate struggles have taken place—the engineers, the colliers, the cotton-spinners, the building trades—still show the unions far larger and more flourishing than before. Any one who will take the trouble to collect and examine the latest trade circulars of the principal societies will see the record of their progress. Increased numbers, wider area, and larger funds are shown from year to year. Everywhere organisation, consolidation, and regularity extend. Englishmen, who never mistake the signs of commercial success, can hardly fail to see that there must be something at bottom to make these live; and men who know how to estimate political forces will recognise the strength of an institution that has an organisation to which no political association in the kingdom can distantly aspire.

In the face of facts like these, it does seem strange that sensible men, and even sensible employers, should continue to talk of unions as nests of misery, folly, and ruin. Men who have to deal with these powerful associations themselves can bring themselves to speak of them as "cancers to be cut out," as "diseases," and "madness" to be cured, and even suggest an Act of Parliament to suppress all associations whatever. It is like the Vatican raving at newspapers and railways. Such an Act of Parliament would be simply a social revolution. It would be as easy to eradicate the "cancer" of unionism as it would to eradicate the "cancer" of public meetings, or the "disease" of a free press. The fact that the flower of our artisan population are staunch unionists, does not prove that unions are beneficial. But it would be more reasonable if the public, and certainly if employers, would think it proved them

to be not quite pestilent and suicidal. They are, from the mere fact of their importance, entitled to respect. No rational man can think that the working men of this country are likely to be found year after year more and more devoted to any system, if it were no less ruinous to themselves than vicious in principle. Unionism, right or wrong, is the grand movement in which the working classes have their heart. Men of sense will recognise this fact, and deal with it accordingly. It is the prevalence of misjudgments like these which make these trade struggles so obstinate; and perhaps it is that which makes them so common.

There is a still worse form of misconception prevalent, which amounts sometimes to personal calumny. It is still the fashion to repeat that unions and strikes are uniformly the work of interested agitators. These men, in the stereotyped phrase, are supposed to drive their misguided victims like sheep. We hear from time to time employers giving us this account of the matter in apparent good faith; just as the Austrians always thought the Italian movement was the work of Mazzini. Now if there is one feature of unionism which is more singular than another it is the scrupulous care with which it maintains the principles of democratic and representative government. It would be difficult to find a single trade society in England in which any official or any board of managers could take any important step, or, what is the same thing, deal with the common funds without a regular written vote from their constituents. Those who talk of the action of a trade-union as if it were a body of Carbonari, must be entirely ignorant of the elaborate machinery by which a union is worked. Before any important step, much less before a general strike is determined on, regular voting papers are sent round to every member of the society; the step is discussed

night after night in every separate lodge; if the subject requires it, delegates are chosen from each lodge; conferences are constantly held, often followed by fresh appeals to the constituencies; the discussions often last six months, and are practically public; the result is at length ascertained by a simple comparison of votes, and is often one which the secretaries and managers have no means whatever of influencing or even foreseeing.

In fact the vote on an important question of one of the large amalgamated societies scattered over the country, the separate lodges of which discuss the subject under very different conditions, and the body of which the secretaries have no means whatever of addressing or meeting, is the purest type of democratic representation of opinion. The subject is one which usually touches each voter, his comfort, his family, and his future, in the most vital manner; it relates to matters with which he is perfectly familiar; he is not accessible to personal appeal, nor, except in a very small degree, to written addresses from any central authority; it is one which he has to discuss with a small number of his fellows, and on which he has to vote with a very large number, but without communication; the ordinary machinery of canvassing, excitement, and party agitation is simply impossible; and the result is one which it is out of the question to predict. It is a species of pure democratic united with true representative government. The members individually vote as in an ancient republic, but generally with the assistance and counsel of special representative assemblies, and invariably in separate and independent groups. If any system ever yet devised makes a dictator or a demagogue impossible it is this. Its great defect is its cumbrousness and want of concentration. But of all others it is the way to bring

out the deliberate opinion of every individual member. It is this—not infatuation—which makes a deliberate strike so obstinate. There is no political institution in this country which carries self-government to anything like the same pitch. And, what should not be forgotten, it is a system which has already given the whole class a very high degree of political education.

As to the managers of these associations they are invariably elected periodically by the same general suffrage. They are almost invariably simple members of the body themselves, and their salaries scarcely exceed their ordinary wages. So far as the personal knowledge of the writer goes (and it is not inconsiderable), they are usually honest, sensible men of business, sometimes strikingly deficient in the art of expression, and the powers of party agitators. The men who direct a strike have usually been at their work until its commencement, and would usually return to it at its close, were it not that they are too often chased out of their trade by all the employers in concert.

The present writer, who has for years known intimately the managers of very many societies, cannot refrain from bearing his witness that amongst them are to be found men as upright, enlightened, and honourable as any in the community; that the influence they possess is almost always the result of tried ability and character; and the instances of such men living out of their followers' necessities are extremely rare. For the most part they go through hard clerks' routine of accounts and reports, under a good deal of persecution from the employers, and are not seldom the most conservative and peaceful counsellors in the whole society. The union is frequently able to suppress the tendency to indiscriminate strikes. It is,

indeed, notorious that the faults into which the leaders of the established unions are apt to fall are routine and excess of caution. I have myself seen a circular issued by the council of an amalgamated society to warn the members against the disposition to strike for which a sudden improvement of trade had given great facilities. The larger and more established the unions become, the fewer causes of struggle arise. And there would be no greater security for the employer and the public than that the societies should be stronger, and their leaders more trusted.

II. Next to the character of these societies and their leaders being fairly judged, it is very desirable that the truth be ascertained as to the success or non-success of strikes. It used to be frequently said, and it has been repeated occasionally by employers, that strikes never succeed. It is only the other day that the newspapers informed us of a very important strike which did result in a great increase of wages. The carpenters of London, a body numbering from 10,000 to 15,000, the majority of whom are in union, demanded, and after a strike of some weeks, defeating a threatened lock-out, succeeded in obtaining, an advance of wages of about 10 per cent. This advance is now being given to the other building trades, and will soon be general. No one doubts that this rise is permanent, and will never be reduced. There is here an undoubted instance of a body numbering nearly 40,000 men obtaining a large and permanent rise of wages by means of a strike. How this is economically possible had better be answered by those economists who first invent industrial laws, and then invent facts to fit them.

The statement, indeed, is so contrary to the experience of every one who has been able to look at

the question from an independent point, and over a wide area, that there is overwhelming proof that it is entirely erroneous. Any one who will search the files of a working-class organ will find accurate reports of countless successful strikes over every part of England. The present writer has in his possession a list of the successful strikes for one single trade in one year. This list contains more than eighty instances in which one union in that period had by actual or threatened strikes obtained increased wages, or, what is the same thing, shorter hours.

The sums which are absurdly calculated as "lost" in a strike are usually not lost at all, but only retained. No doubt, in every prolonged strike a good deal is lost, but it is chiefly in interest upon fixed capital. To calculate all the sums which might have been spent in wages as "lost" or "wasted" is simply puerile. The wages fund, in the language of economists, is the sum which the capitalist devotes to the payment of wages; and since in a general strike or lock-out the owners of vast and costly factories cannot employ the fund (except temporarily) in any other way, and their customers have to wait for their goods, sooner or later the wages fund, or most of it, is paid to the workmen in the trade. Whether it comes to them regularly or spasmodically signifies a great deal to the well-being of the recipients; but in the long run they get the gross sum, though somewhat discounted. General and even partial strikes are usually preceded and succeeded by extra production and labour, which nearly equalise the rate for the whole period. Very many lock-outs are simply a mode of stopping production during a stagnant state of trade, and are occasionally only a device of some of the more powerful employers to force their own body to cease production, whilst they are waiting or manœuvring

for a rise of price. During a strike both masters and men reduce all expenditure to a minimum, which by itself is an obvious saving. And there are many strikes and lock-outs in which the actual loss from various causes is a trifle, or where it would be inevitable from other causes. But in any case, to calculate the deferred expenditure of wages as "loss" is a sophistical use of terms. The employer in a strike suffers the loss of interest on fixed capital, and of his profit (a loss which is often from other reasons inevitable); the workman suffers a loss of comfort which is often compensated by the discipline it enforces. The real loss is the loss of common interest and good feeling; but the supposed loss of wages rests generally on a mere juggle of words.

A careful investigation of the subject in such records as are constantly published, totally dispels the prevalent idea that unions and strikes have no object but that of raising wages, and in that object they invariably meet a "miserable monotony of defeat."

Strikes, of course, frequently fail. But a careful comparison will show the following results:—

1. Strikes to obtain a rise of wages or a reduction of hours usually succeed.

2. Strikes to resist a reduction of wages usually fail.

3. Strikes to enforce trade rules or to suppress objectionable practices usually fail in appearance and succeed in reality.

4. Lock-outs to crush unions invariably fail.

III. After that of general protection against abuses and against overtime, one of the chief and the most useful functions of Unionism is to resist the tendency to continual fluctuations in wages. At first sight nothing seems more natural than that wages should

vary with the price of the product. The principal objection, however, against the sliding scale of wages and prices is that it associates the workmen directly with the gambling vicissitudes of the market. To do this is to destroy one of the benefits of civilisation and the social justification of large capitals. It is of vital interest to society that the actual labourer should have a regular and not a fluctuating means of subsistence. As he can save but little, he has no reserve to stand sudden changes; and sudden loss or stoppage of his wages means moral and physical degradation to him. He has not the education or the means of foreseeing, much less of providing against, the wider influences of the market. The great gains and the great losses naturally should fall to the share of the capitalist alone.

He and his order can act on the state of the market, and are bound to watch and know its movements. Society is bound to protect them only on condition that they perform this function satisfactorily. But to let every little vicissitude of the market fall directly on the mere labourer, who knows nothing about it, and cannot affect it if he did, is simple barbarism. In such a state of things the capitalist abdicates his real post and becomes a mere job-master or ganger. He associates his helpless workmen in every speculative adventure. He leaves them to bear the effects of a glut which his recklessness may have caused, or of a foreign war which his prudence might have foreseen. Every fall in the price of wares, fluctuating as this is from a complication of accidents, mulcts the labourer suddenly of ten, twelve, or fifteen per cent of his living. How many middle-class families could stand this every quarter? To the labourer, who has no reserve, no credit, and no funded income, and who by the necessity of the case lives from week to week and

from hand to mouth, it means the sacrifice of his comforts, of his children's education, of his honest efforts. There was truth, though it may be not very fully expressed, in the words of the old puddler at the recent conference: "He knew no reason why working men's wages were to be pulled to pieces to suit the foreign markets." Capital, in fact, would become a social nuisance if it could only make the labourer a blind co-speculator in its adventures.

It is far from the writer's meaning to deny that wages must in the long run be accommodated to profits. From year to year, or over longer periods, wages will gradually find their level. But it is a totally different thing that they should fluctuate with all the erratic movements incident to every market price-list. A merchant will not give to his accountants more than the average salaries of his business. He does not, however, walk into his counting-house, and tell his clerks that, having lost a ship which he forgot to insure, he reduces their salaries ten per cent. The wages of all the superior trades are, or might be, nearly stationary for long periods together. The engineers, who form a branch of the iron trade, subject to amazing fluctuations, have been paid at the same rates now invariably for more than ten years. So till the rise of the last few months had the London builders. Of course the men, to do this, must have foregone every temporary or partial rise. For their true good these sudden advances in wages do them more real harm even than sudden reduction. Acting on this principle the trades just mentioned, and most of the leading trades, have maintained an unvarying rate of wages, as well as suppressed those spasmodic seasons of excessive production and sudden cessation which form the glory of the race of industrial conquerors. But to do this the workmen must

have a union capable of putting them on an equality with capital.

As it is this interference with what is called Free Trade which is the main charge against Unionism, it is important to examine this question in detail. It is often asked why cannot the fifty shillings' worth of puddling be bought in the same manner as fifty shillings' worth of pig-iron? Well, one thing is, that the pig-iron can wait till next week or next month. It is in no immediate hurry. But the fifty shillings' worth of puddling cannot wait, even a few days. The "human machine" in question is liable to the fatal defect of dying. Nor is it in all the relations of life that "each man is free to bargain for himself." It is curious in how many sides of our existence this liberty is curtailed. If one wants £1000 worth of horse, one can go to Tattersall's and buy it without question. But if one wants £1000 worth of wife, there will be a good many questions asked, and a good many people to consult. The lady's relations even may wish to say something; there may be all sorts of stipulations, to say nothing of settlements. A man cannot buy a place in a partnership exactly in open market. He cannot go to a physician or a lawyer or a priest and haggle about the fee.

Wherever there are close or permanent human relations, between one man and many, an understanding with all jointly is the regular course. Every partnership of labour, all co-operation to effect anything in common, involves this mutual agreement between all. It is because employers fail to see that manufacture is only the combined labour of many of which they are the managers, that they regard the whole concern, stock, plant, and "hands," as raw material, to be bought and sold. The ironmaster

who buys pig-iron is not entering into permanent relations with it, or even with its possessor. It cannot work with him, obey him, trust him. The "human machine," however, is a very surprising engine. It has a multitude of wants, a variety of feelings, and is capable of numerous human impulses which are commonly called human nature. An ironmaster cannot buy in open market fifty shillings' worth of puddling, because he does not want fifty shillings' worth of puddling. It would be of no good to him if he had it. He wants a man who will work, not his fifty shillings' worth of puddling, but day by day and year by year; who will work when he is not himself overlooking him; who will work intelligently, and not ruin his machinery and waste his stuff; who will not cheat him, or rob him, or murder him; who will work as a chance hireling will not and cannot work; who will trust him to act fairly, and feel pride in his work, and in the place.

If he cannot get men like these he knows that he will be ruined and undersold by those who can. He knows that fifty shillings' worth of black slave would not help him, nor fifty shillings' worth of steam engine. Do what he will, perfect machinery to a miracle, still the manufacturer must ultimately depend on the co-operation of human brains and hearts. No "human machinery" will serve his end. Can a general in war buy fifty shillings' worth of devoted soldiers? Can he make his bargain with each man of his army separately? They are too precious to be picked up in a moment, and their efficiency lies in their union. If the ironmaster had to go into the labour market as often as he has to go into the iron market, and haggle for every day's work as he does for every pig and bar, he would be a dead or ruined man in a year. He cannot buy puddling as he can buy pigs, because

in one word men are not pig-iron. Sentiment this, perhaps, but a sentiment which cannot be conquered, and produces stern facts. For the fifty shillings' worth of puddling by long reflection has discovered that to the making of iron goes the enduring, willing, intelligent labour of many trained men; that it is work which is impossible without a permanent combination of will and thought, but the produce of which may be unfairly divided unless all act with a spirit of mutual defence and protection. They see their employers too often forgetting this, the underlying fact of all industry, and their answer is, Unionism. Sentimental! emotional economy! but a fact. When pigs and bars of iron exhibit a similar phenomenon, an ironmaster will buy his fifty shillings' worth of puddling as freely as he buys his pigs or his bars,—but not till then.

IV. It seems almost waste of time, in the face of the prevalent tendency of working men to unite, to argue that there is not the slightest necessity for it. But the fact that without combination the capitalist has a tremendous advantage over the labourer is so important a matter in this discussion, that it may be well to examine it further. Now this advantage arises in at least three ways. In the first place, although the workmen altogether are just as necessary to the capitalist as he is to them, yet in a great factory each separate workman is of infinitesimal necessity to the proprietor, whilst he is of vital necessity to the workman. The employer of 1000 men can without inconvenience at any moment dispense with one man or even ten men. The one man, however, if he has no means or reserve to find other employment, must submit on pain of destitution to himself and his family. In the same way, if there were absolutely

no concert or communication between them, the employer could easily deal with every one of his thousand hands in succession, just as a giant could destroy an army if he could get at each man separately. But the moment they agree to act together, and to help each other in turn, the bargain is equalised ; the need which each side has of the other is on a par, and the power each has to hold its ground is nearly equivalent.

In the second place, the kind of need which each has of the other is very different. The capitalist needs the labourer to make larger profits. A diminution of these, their total cessation, and positive loss, is an evil ; but it is an evil which most capitalists can very well sustain, and often experience, for years at a time. A strike or a lock-out is a blow to a capitalist ; but it is like a bad debt or a bad speculation,—it is an incident of his trade, allowed for and provided against. But to the workman (who would not be a workman if he had even a little capital) the stoppage of wages, in the absence of any combination or fund, means utter destruction, disease, death, and personal degradation, eviction from his house and home, the sale of his goods and belongings, the break-up of his household, the humiliation of his wife, the ruin of his children's bodies and minds. To the capitalist a trade struggle is a blot in his balance-sheet. To the workman, *if isolated and unaided*, it means every affliction which the imagination can conceive.

Thirdly, this is a question in which time is all-important. To the capitalist weeks or months at most represent pecuniary loss. To the unaided workman weeks often, to say nothing of months, are simply starvation for himself and his family. Alone, the working man must take his wages down on Saturday night at a fearful discount. If he could

wait for his money he would get them in full. The Dorsetshire labourer, ignorant and hopeless, could get double wages in a Northern county—if he could get there. He sometimes knows this; but he will not leave his wife and children to the death of the grave or the workhouse. If all the labourers in England could lie in bed for a month during harvest, they might get any wages they liked to ask; and a dozen of champagne all round. Wages questions are simply questions of time, and capital means insurance against time. The familiar and recognised analysis of labour and capital comes only to this—that capital forms the store by which the workmen are supported until the joint product can be utilised or exchanged; wages are only the portions of this store meted out periodically to the workmen whilst they are uniting and labouring. By the very essence of this arrangement the possessor of this store (and in the abstract no man is the possessor of it except by the free will of the rest) can wait his own time. The recipients of it cannot. To any one who follows out all these considerations, it may well seem simple pedantry to accumulate arguments to show that the capitalist and the individual workman are on equal terms. It is obvious to the daily experience of all mankind that they are not; and all the reasoning in the world cannot make them to be so.

There remains, of course, to be noticed the competition of the employers. This is the sole reply of the other side to all the reasons just mentioned. No doubt the influence of this competition is very great —without it the workmen would be (what they occasionally are) at the mercy of the capitalists. But the question is, whether its influence is so great as to counterbalance all else on the other side, and establish an equality. Now this competition of the employers for the workmen is subject to two very important

qualifications. The first is that there is a universal and irresistible tendency in all employers, which (as Adam Smith shows) is much more powerful and efficient in the smaller class — capitalists and sellers as against the workmen and the public—*not* to raise wages or lower prices. This is the "silent combination," which needs no formal expression, and generally becomes a point of honour. To such a pitch is this carried that, for instance in the iron trade, the association practically binds its members to fixed prices and wages. So that in this very iron trade this competition of the employers for the men does not exist. As a last resort the employers will compete against each other for the workmen, but they know it is a suicidal measure. It is one which their small numbers, superior foresight, and power of holding over, makes them able to dispense with except at the last pinch. And it is, therefore, but sparingly employed. In all North Staffordshire, the scene of the late iron strike, there are said to be but six firms, and those are in close combination. Is it likely they bid against each other for men?

There is a second very important qualification, also, which neutralises this competition of the capitalists with each other. This is the competition of the workmen with each other. Just as, if left quite to itself, there may be a tendency amongst employers to raise wages by bidding against each other for "hands"; so there is as strong, or a stronger, tendency amongst the employed to lower wages by bidding against each other for employment. Sometimes, if markets are very brisk, capital seeks labour; but more often in this country labour seeks capital. With our redundant population and our vast reserve of labour-power just struggling for life—that incubus of destitute and unemployed labour which lies so

heavily on all efforts of our artisans, hungering for their places—the common state of things is that of labourers competing for employment.

At any rate competition is as broad as it is long. What the employer loses by it when business is pressing, he gains by it when labour is plentiful. And this competition, one so fluctuating and vast, is outside any conceivable combination or union of the men. Nothing can prevent the dregs or Helotism of labour from continually underselling it. Surely this use of competition in the argument is thoroughly one-eyed. We are told that for the workmen's protection and relief against low wages, oppression, or sharp practice, there is the great compensator, the competition of the masters. They quite overlook the fact that this is at least counterbalanced by the competition of the men. Our case is that the individual workman has to struggle incessantly against this competition—*plus* the position, the opportunities, the waiting and reserve power which his capital gives to the employer.

Why, it is asked, is the puddler more at the mercy of the great capitalist than the farmer is at the mercy of the corn-dealer? No doubt every small capitalist is at a great disadvantage in dealing with a very great capitalist. But the disadvantage of the mere day workman in dealing with his employer is out of all proportion to this. The seller of all wares has a certain stock, a certain reserve power, a capital of some kind, which by the conditions of his existence the day labourer has not. The former can wait at least for some time; he can send his wares from market to market. To the mere day worker it is often this market or none—this wage or none—lower rates or starvation. Now under all this lies the fundamental fallacy which distorts the reasoning of

many capitalists and most economists. We come, in fact, to the root of the matter. The labourer HAS NOT GOT A THING TO SELL.

The labour market, as it is called by an unhappy figure, is in reality totally unlike the produce market. There are three grand features in which *labour* differs from a *commodity*. Firstly, every seller of wares, even a hawker, has by the hypothesis a *stock*, a realised store, a portable visible thing—a commodity. If he were in need of immediate support—that is, wages—he would not be a seller or trader at all. The trader is necessarily relieved of all immediate and certainly of all physical pressure of want. The difference here between £100 and nothing is infinite. It is so difficult to persuade millionaires that the whole human race have not got private capitals and sums in the funds. To a large class of working men, however, it is a daily question and need—get bread to-morrow, or die. The labourer has nothing to fall back upon, and a few lost hours pull him down.

In the second place, in most cases the seller of a commodity can send it or carry it about from place to place, and market to market, with perfect ease. He need not be on the spot—he generally can send a sample — he usually treats by correspondence. A merchant sits in his counting-house, and by a few letters and forms transports and distributes the subsistence of a whole city from continent to continent. In other cases, as the shopkeeper, the ebb and flow of passing multitudes supplies the want of locomotion in his wares. His customers supply the locomotion for him. This is a true market. Here competition acts rapidly, fully, simply, and fairly. It is totally otherwise with a day labourer, who has no commodity to sell. He must be himself present at every market—which means costly personal locomotion. He cannot

correspond with his employer; he cannot send a sample of his strength; nor do employers knock at his cottage door. This is not a market. There is but one true labour market: where the negro slave is (or rather was) sold like a horse. But here, as in the horse fair, the bargain is not made with the negro or the horse, but with the trader who owns them, and who is, strictly speaking, a merchant freely on equal terms disposing of a commodity. But if the horse or the negro came to sell himself, what sort of bargain would he make, starving in the very market? In a word, there is no real market, no true sale of a commodity, where vendor and wares are one and the same—and that one a man—totally without resources or provisions for himself—with the wants of a citizen, and a family at home.

Thirdly (and this is the important point), the labourer has not got a commodity to sell, because what he seeks to do is not to exchange products, but to combine to produce. When buyer and seller meet, in market or out, the price is paid, the goods change hands, they part, the contract is complete, the transaction ends. Even where, as in complex dealings, the bargain is prolonged, it is a dealing in specific goods. It is not the formation of a continuous relation which for the workman at least absorbs and determines his whole life. If the trader fails to do business with one customer, he turns to another. The business over, he leaves him, perhaps for ever. In any case the contract is a contract for the sale (*i.e.* simple transfer) of one specific thing. How totally different is this from the relations of employer and employed. This is permanent, or rather continuous—it involves the entire existence of one at least—it implies sustained co-operation. This is no contract to sell something, it is the contract to do something, it is a contract of partnership or

joint activity, it is an association involving every side of life. The workman must live close to his work, his hours must conform to it; the arrangement of his household, his wife's duties and occupations, his home in every detail, are wholly dependent on the terms and conditions of this work. The person by whom he is employed, and certainly the class of employers, can affect him for good or evil in the most constant or vital manner. His whole comfort, peace, and success —very often his health—under the factory system, usually his dwelling, are in the hands of this same employer. By a series of small arrangements, difficult to follow in detail, this employer can make his position satisfactory or intolerable.

Nothing is more fallacious than to call labour questions simply a matter of wages or money. Quite apart from the price of the labour, there are in most trades a multitude of conditions and circumstances which make the whole difference to the well-being of the workmen. Do men know, for instance, the life of a London bricklayer, who changes his lodging often once a quarter, and often walks six miles before he begins his ten-hour day at six o'clock? Every time he has to change his employer (who at most, on his side, has to wait till he gets another man), the workman has to give up his home, break up his household, separate from his wife, draw his children from school, and suffer infinite differences affecting his comfort, health, and plans. A few weeks out of work may ruin the prospects of his son, injure his family's health, turn them out of a familiar home, and change him to a broken man. Let us remember that this competition implies the constant locomotion of families. And then let us trace out the moral and mental consequences of this chance life. Even in the higher branches an artisan family lead a frightfully nomad

existence. Any one who has known working men in their homes must have been painfully struck with the difficulty of tracing them after a few months. What would be the feeling of our middle classes to be subject to a similar competition—a competition not confined to their warehouses, and affecting only their balance-sheet, but one which tossed about their homes like counters, brought them now and then to the gate of the workhouse, and rode at random over every detail of their lives?

Much of this is of course inevitable. It is a life which happily has its compensations. But what concerns us now is to see how utterly different is this state of things from the selling of a commodity. What sale of a commodity affects this complex network of human relations? It would be as right to speak of every trader needing a partner, every woman ready for marriage, every applicant for a post of trust, as having a commodity to sell. The followers of Napoleon and Garibaldi were not simply men having a commodity to sell. The engagement of a workman for hire is, as completely as these cases are, an instance of a voluntary combination of energies and capacities. The union of capitalist and labourers is, in the highest sense, a partnership involving a real equality of duties and powers,—they finding the strength, the patience, the manual skill, the physical exhaustion,—he finding the management, the machinery, the immediate means of subsistence, and, by rights, the protection of all kinds. He and they are as necessary to each other as men in any relation of life. They can affect each other as intimately for good and for bad as can any partners whatever. The dignity of their work and lives rests in their knowing and performing their mutual duties and their common tasks. Applied to this noble and intimate relation of life—this grand

institution of society—the language of the market or of barter is a cruel and senseless cant. Nor will any sound condition of labour exist until the captains of Industry come to feel themselves to be life-long fellow-soldiers with the lowest fighter in the Battle of Labour, and have ceased to speak of themselves as speculators who go into one market to buy fifty shillings' worth of pig-iron, and into another to buy fifty shillings' worth of puddling.

It is essentially for this sort of *protection* that Unionism is devised. Any one who regards it as a simple instrument to raise wages is, as Adam Smith says, "as ignorant of the subject as of human nature." Unionism, above all, aims at making regular, even, and safe the workman's life. No one who had not specially studied it would conceive the vast array of grievances against which Unionism and strikes are directed. If we looked only to that side of the question, we should come to fancy that from the whole field of labour there went up one universal protest against injustice. There is a "miserable monotony" of wrong and suffering in it. Excessive labour, irregular labour, spasmodic overwork, spasmodic locking-out, "overtime," "short time," double time, night work, Sunday work, truck in every form, overlookers' extortion, payment in kind, wages reduced by drawbacks, "long pays," or wages held back, fines, confiscations, rent and implements irregularly stopped out of wages, evictions from tenements, "black lists" of men, short weights, false reckoning, forfeits, children's labour, women's labour, unhealthy labour, deadly factories and processes, unguarded machinery, defective machinery, preventible accidents, recklessness from desire to save,—in countless ways we find a waste of human life, health, well-being, and power, which are not represented in the ledgers or allowed for in bargains.

Let any one read such a Blue-book as that on the employment of children, which contains much on labour generally. It reads like one long catalogue of oppression. Every practice which can ruin body and spirit,—every form of ignorance, disease, degradation, and destitution comes up in turn. The higher trades, as that of the iron-workers, are free from many of these, from most of them, but overwork and truck and forfeits. But take the records of any trade, and it will furnish a dark catalogue of struggles about one or more of these grievances. Take the Reports of the Medical Inspectors to the Privy Council, of the Inspectors of Mines and certain classes of factories, or that of the Staffordshire potteries. Take the Report of the Miners' Association often cited. It reads like one long indictment against the recklessness of capital and the torpidity of the legislature. It is not that each individual capitalist produces or even knows such things. Not he, but the system is at fault. The wrong each man does is not great,—that which he does intentionally is very small. But as a body they all work out this one end blindly; for a sophistical jargon, falsely called Economic Science, has trained them to think that fifty shillings' worth of puddling—that is, the lives of men, women, and children—should be bought and sold in market overt, like pigs and bars of iron.

Against this state of things, as yet, the only organised protection is Unionism. It is a system at bottom truly conservative, mainly protective, and essentially legal. It is a system still quite undeveloped, and most defective, and often deeply corrupted. But it is one, it must be remembered, which has as yet no fair chance. It is proscribed by the legislature, and as yet unrecognised. What prospect is there of these institutions being healthy, well managed, and moderate,

whilst they cannot get the legal sanction which the humblest association obtains? They can hold no property, bring no action, have no assistance or protection from the law. Just as under the old Combination Laws strikes were often thoroughly evil in their action, so now under the Association Laws unions are forced into the attitude of conspiracies. These evils are mainly due to the craven injustice shown to them by Parliaments of employers. But even now they are, in the main, moderately, honestly, and wisely directed. Their managers are sometimes dishonest adventurers; their system is sometimes corrupt; but there is not a tenth of the corruption of our ordinary railway and joint-stock company system. Sometimes, however, they are models of good government. Occasionally they call out men of the finest and noblest political instincts, men cast in the very mould of Hampden.

This is not the place to discuss at length their great deficiencies; but no man is more aware how far they fall short of what is wanted than the present writer. In the first place, they are simply a political, practical, temporary remedy for a social and moral evil. The real cause of all industrial evils is the want of a higher moral spirit in all engaged in industry alike. Social and moral remedies alone, in the long run, can change the state of things to health; and the working men on their side have as much to learn in social and moral duty as their employers. All this (and without it nothing permanent can be gained) Unionism totally ignores, and even tends to conceal and choke. Hence a keen spirit of Unionism often blunts the members of a strong association to their own duties and to the higher wants of their class. If small, the association too often fosters a narrow, sometimes a most selfish spirit. Often it fosters a dull

temper of indifference and comfortable disregard of all others around. It often encourages the combative spirit and a love of visible triumph. Occasionally, as at Sheffield, it develops cruel tyranny. Above all, it seriously divides trade from trade, skilled workmen from unskilled, unionist from non-unionist.

These, however, are all evils not so much inherent in the nature of unions as caused by their want of permanent and legal position, public recognition, larger extension, wider combination, and higher education. The grand evil inherent in their nature is that they are simply *political* expedients, and share all the defects of political remedies applied to social diseases. Still, if Reform Leagues and constitutional agitation, or, in the last resort, organised resistance to oppression, do not cure the maladies of the state, they are essentially necessary—and, sometimes, are the first necessity. To save the people from the immediate injuries of bad government is sometimes the very condition of all other effort towards improvement. If working men, holding by their union for simply protective purposes, would turn towards other measures to improve themselves, to learn greater self-control, higher education, and purer domestic life, their ends would be gained. In the meantime, as a step to them, as giving a breathing time and support, Unionism is indispensable. To consolidate and elevate it is, perhaps, the working man's first duty. For in the midst of the increasing power and recklessness of capital one can see no immediate safeguard but this against the ruin of the workman's life, his annihilation as a member of society—against the consequent deterioration of the community, and ultimate social revolution.

III

INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATION

(1865)

From the year 1860 I was associated with some of the most ardent apostles of the Co-operative Movement, such as Thomas Hughes, J. Malcolm Ludlow, Lloyd Jones, Dr. Furnivall, and G. J. Holyoake; and I shared their interest and hopes for the new schemes. With introductions from them and many friends in the North, I visited the Pioneers in Rochdale, and attended many Co-operative committees and meetings in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Having personal knowledge of the leaders and their methods, and having made a study of their printed Rules, Tables, and Balance-sheets, I had ample means of forming an estimate of their work and prospects.

I saw that, whilst the system of "Distributive Stores" was a real success and was destined to a great development both material and social, the attempt to found Co-operative Production *for the general market was a petty and unstable incident which could have no future. And I saw that the hope of those who looked for* Co-operative Production *to reorganise the conditions of Labour was an idle dream. Co-operation could do nothing to supersede or even to reform the current system of Wages-earning.*

I made bold to tell this to my friends. More than forty years have passed; and, whilst the "Stores" have had a marvellous growth, "Production" in the open market

is still a drop in the ocean of Labour. "Co-operation" has taught more than two millions of working people to supply themselves with necessaries in methods of strict economy and thrift. It has not enabled the mass of the proletariat to mend the conditions of Labour by more than a hair's breadth. On the contrary it only draws off some admirable men from turning to deeper and wiser means of salvation.

The "Stores" have continued to double their numbers and their business with every decade. For independent "Production," i.e. *manufactures sold to other than "Co-operators," the result is infinitesimal. And as to "Co-operative Production" benefiting workmen who are not shareholders or members, the result is a pitiable minimum.*

The excellent account in the Encyclopædia Britannica, *vol. xxvii., by Mr. Aneurin Williams (1902), which gives a total business of more than 75 millions, sets down the profits of Productive Societies at £158,315—and a Dividend on Wages of £20,545—and that is on a trade of three millions and a half.*

The latest work on Co-operative Industry *that I have seen is by Ernest Ames (1907). He tells us in his chapter on the Productive Societies that "the position of Labour is very similar to that which is found in ordinary well and considerately managed centres of industry." Again he adds: "Labour is left by the great bulk of modern co-operative enterprise in an unchanged economic relationship." That is exactly the warning I gave in 1865 to my friends, the Co-operators; and it is sad to relate the disappointment of such high and worthy hopes (1908).*

"*Let us abandon all useless and irritating discussion as to the origin and distribution of wealth, and proceed at once to establish the moral rules which should regulate it as a social function.*"—AUGUSTE COMTE.

Two serious attempts to raise their condition are

being made by the working classes from their own spontaneous efforts. Both have been conceived, elaborated, and maintained by their unaided instinct. One of these—Unionism—has been abundantly discussed. The other is Co-operation. The first is the political, direct, immediate remedy for industrial wants. The second is more nearly the social, gradual, and indirect process. Unionism is an open and organised resistance; and, pushed to the extreme, approaches to political insurrection. Co-operation is an effort towards social reform, and in its type verges on social revolution. Both have played, and are destined to play, a large part in the progress of industry. Each maintains most valuable truths and attains many excellent results. Both are of the deepest interest to the social inquirer. Each, however, is imperfect and somewhat one-sided. Each ignores the very important side which the other represents. To estimate them truly they must be viewed at the same glance and judged by comparison.

In dealing with co-operation, it is happily possible to speak in a much more judicial and critical spirit than it is in speaking of unionism. Trades-unions have been the object of so much ignorant abuse, that a friendly writer is forced into an attitude of controversy and almost of advocacy. With co-operation, it is very desirable that its weak side should be insisted on at least as fully as its strongest. Its partisans and even the public are rather inclined to exaggerate its importance. During Elections one sees many candidates on both sides, who guard themselves from betraying many definite opinions, loudly proclaim themselves in favour of "co-operation." Doubtless it would have been as much to the purpose to proclaim themselves staunch adherents of the penny post, or ardent friends of the half-holiday movement. Of

course, as the Legislature has, and can have, nothing to do with co-operation, it was totally out of place in candidates' addresses. And many of them would have shrunk from the great revolution which "co-operation" really is in the minds of its most active apostles. This, however, proved that it is considered a safe thing to profess; and serves to indicate interest in social questions. But as it is beset by no prejudices whatever, it is only right that its value and its defects be impartially brought out; and that its adherents may not mislead themselves as to its promises.

This inquiry is specially opportune, as the annual return of the Registrar of Friendly Societies is now before us, and we are able to take stock of the co-operative movement from official authority. On the 31st of December 1864 there were, according to this return, 505 registered societies spread over almost the whole of England, in town, village, and county. The total number of members (several returns being defective) is 129,761, the share capital is £685,072, the loan capital is £89,423, the assets and property amount to £891,775, the business done in the year is £2,742,957, and the profit realised is £225,569.[1] As 110 societies neglected to send returns, these figures would probably need to be corrected by an addition of 10 or 15 per cent. These societies are all, with very few exceptions (almost all of which decline to send returns), "stores" for the sale of food and clothing. The average profit, it will be seen, amounts to something like 9 per cent (in one case it is 25 per cent) on the business done, and something like 30 per cent (in some cases 50 per cent) on the share and loan capital. Only thirteen of the 395 societies that

[1] This has been enormously increased. The members are now in excess of two millions. The capital is nearly 30 millions sterling and the business 75 millions sterling (1908).

make returns fail to show a profit, and these are, with one notable exception, very small or young companies commencing operations. The profit may be taken as enough to pay a dividend of 1s. 7d. in the pound upon all purchases after payment of expenses, gifts, depreciation, and £5 per cent interest on shares and loans. Many of the principal societies far exceed this, and the famous Pioneers (by no means a single instance), after providing for interest on loans and shares, educational fund, reserve fund, depreciation fund, and charity, still paid last quarter 2s. 4d. in the pound on members' purchases. A return this which railway shareholders might study with profit, if not with satisfaction!

This success, however, which can be measured by tabular statements, is far the smallest portion. The indirect effect of co-operation which cannot be reduced to figures is vast and pervading. In a northern city which had long suffered from adulterated flour, a co-operative flour-mill was established. It not only supplied a perfectly pure article to its own large body of members and customers, but (in order to stand their ground) the other mills of the city were obliged to do the same. The first thing that a well-managed and extensive store does in a town is to destroy a number of useless and dishonest shops all round the neighbourhood, the second is visibly to reduce destitution and the poor-rates, the third, where it is very strong, is to diminish strikes and sensibly improve wages. Whatever stirs the active and resolute spirits of a district to fresh union, patience, and self-denial, and gives them a considerable common fund and puts a small sum at the free disposal of each, at once raises their tone and makes them independent of instant necessities. And the change is one which in different ways, but with equal distinctness, makes itself felt by the em-

ployer, the clergyman, the schoolmaster, the publican, and the policeman.

The case of Rochdale is naturally the most striking that can be taken. There the Pioneers Society alone now numbers 5200 members, with a capital of £71,000, and an annual business of £200,000. Associated with it is the Corn-mill Society and the Cotton Manufacturing Company, both owned and worked principally by the same class. The effect of this movement on the town is most obvious. During the worst times of the cotton distress the Pioneers was unshaken. The material prosperity and well-being of the whole town has received an impetus from it. The "store" has affected for good the moral, intellectual, and industrial tone of a large city. Its mere existence is sufficient to make it almost secured against either great demoralisation or great destitution. The importance of this work is recognised by all classes of the inhabitants. There have been no more zealous friends of the movement than the clergy, many of the municipal officers, and both the late and the present representative in Parliament. The Rochdale movement, which dates from 1844, owes its origin and its success to a knot of men of very remarkable character and ability. There were amongst the founders some men of real mercantile genius—men who might have made their own fortunes ten times over—which they united with the power of inspiring and directing their fellows. Some of them are still at their post at Rochdale, rich in nothing but the gratitude and esteem of their fellow-citizens, for whilst they might easily have raised themselves amongst the great millionaires of Lancashire they were contented with giving prosperity to a city and new energy to the working classes of England.

The effect of a very flourishing store, and even of

a small manufacturing society, in one of the northern valleys, where factories are more or less shut off from free correspondence with the neighbourhood, is to produce a very perceptible rise of wages; the society, either as a bank, or as an employer, often as both, forms a reserve, on which the workman can fall back if dismissed. But of course this result is only visible when isolation or local circumstances enable a single society to make itself felt. Another immediate effect is that of the ready-money system, which is universally and very strictly enforced at the co-operative shops. They form also the most complete and valuable savings-bank — the saving being effected continually upon every daily purchase, retained out of the immediate control of the investor, and usually unperceived by him. Thus a member of the Rochdale store, upon every pound of tea or piece of bacon which he buys, drops about twelve per cent of the price (the ordinary retailer's profit) into his money-box, which at the end of the year comes out a respectable sum. This process is locally embodied in the formula, "the more one eats the more one gets." A species of savings-bank with which no other can remotely compare! Adulteration in goods is almost invariably and completely checked by a store. Without exception, they may be said to sell perfectly sound and fair goods; and multitudes of working people, who never knew the taste of pure tea or coffee, or wholesome bread or flour, have become very sharp critics as to quality, for they purchase wholesale, by their agents, the very best which the markets offer.

No reasonable observer, however, can imagine that accumulating savings, avoiding debt, obtaining good and cheap food, or the "making a pound go a long way," is the sole feature, though it is the main feature, of the co-operative system. Co-operation now numbers

a large and highly organised band of propagandists. It forms a new "persuasion" in itself, with all the machinery and enthusiasm of a religious sect. There are men who devote themselves to preach and extend co-operation, just as there are men who devote themselves to awakening souls or advocating temperance. In every society there are men who give their time, labour, and often the savings of their lives, to found and establish a new "store" or to bring their neighbours to look on the system as a vital truth. The "pledge," the abolition of slavery, free trade, and "Bible religion," have never been preached with more systematic activity than this has. It has its organ, its lectures, its "conferences," its dogmas, its celebrations, and it would not be an English institution if it had not its testimonials and its subscription funds.

It has developed a style of thought and speech which is strangely akin to that of a religious movement, and in co-operation tracts the system is expounded in phrases which are in familiar use with reference to sacred subjects. The nucleus of many a flourishing society consists of men who have a strong impulse for social improvement, and whose motives are at least as strongly the benefit of their fellows as that of themselves. No one can read the *Co-operator* regularly without seeing that it records a movement in which some of the finest characters and spirits amongst the working classes, from one end of England to the other, are absorbed; without admiring the energy, perseverance, sagacity, and conscientiousness which these efforts display; without learning to respect the spirit of union, faith, and self-sacrifice which they frequently exert. The constant acts of benevolence, of unflinching patience, and of well-deserved confidence, with which co-operative records are full, are truly touching. Co-operative poetry alone forms a literature in itself; and in the

Co-operator's pages one may often read a piece full of terse, vigorous lines, which, if not exactly a poem, is eloquent versification. Nor can any man of feeling or discernment witness a really worthy co-operative celebration — see those Lancashire or Yorkshire workmen, with their wives and children, meet in their own hall, surrounded by their own property, to consider their own affairs—hear them join in singing, sometimes a psalm, sometimes a chorus—listen to the homely wit, the prudent advice, the stirring appeal, and feel the spirit of goodwill, conviction, and resolution in which they are met to celebrate, as it were, their escape from Egyptian bondage,—no one, if present at such a meeting, can fail to recognise that co-operation, if not a moral or social movement in itself, has had the benefit of many high, moral, and social tendencies to stimulate and foster it.

The best testimony for co-operation, in its form of the "store" system, is this—that in every leading town, men recognised as the most able, conscientious, and energetic of their order amongst the working classes, will generally be found active supporters of the "store"; and those amongst the independent and educated classes who sympathise most earnestly and wisely with the welfare of the working classes, will be found to acknowledge its claims and services. No man of generous feeling can help being moved to admiration when he recalls the homes which have been saved and brightened; the weight of debt, friendlessness, destitution, and bad habits which have been relieved; the hope and spirit which have been infused into the working classes by this single agency —the co-operative system. It has come successfully through the trial of the cotton distress; it is spreading into every corner, even every rural village in England, and is firmly established in Germany and France.

It is precisely the great influence which co-operation now exercises, and the very high qualities which are devoted to its extension, that render it the more essential to examine it closely—to know exactly what it can and what it cannot do—what are its defects and its dangers. The men who have founded and support these institutions are far too straightforward and resolute to fear any honest judgment upon their efforts. The last thing that they would choose would be any attempt to shut out the truth from themselves, or any one else, respecting the system; and once convinced of the fairness and goodwill of the counsellor or critic, they will attend to genuine counsel or criticism with patience and impartiality. In this spirit the following remarks are offered by one who has more than a mere goodwill for the movement in its legitimate sphere, and as a material expedient; who has a strong esteem and sympathy for it, its objects and its adherents; who recognises in it and them some of the very best grounds of hope now extant; and who desires only to define somewhat more closely the true scope and limits of co-operation.

Let us come at once to the key of the whole position. Co-operation, it is usually said, is designed to elevate the condition of labour by associating capital with labour, and by giving to labour an equal interest with capital in the results of production. It is also said (and with truth) to be in a flourishing condition, and to have firm ground to rest on. Now what is the case actually? Flourishing as co-operation clearly is in a pecuniary sense (with the exception of a very small number of manufacturing societies to be noticed presently), the whole of the co-operative societies throughout the kingdom are simply "stores," *i.e.* shops for the sale of food, and sometimes clothing. These, of course, cannot affect the condition of industry

materially. Labour here does not in any sense share in the produce with capital. The relation of employer and employed remains just the same, and not a single workman would change the conditions of his employment if the store were to extinguish all the shops of a town.

In such an extreme case, the workmen would still be hired for wages in the ordinary competition of labour, for the shops do not employ any of them. The cloth, flour, tea, and meat which the store now supplies, have all been made under the same conditions as before, and are simply purchased in open market in the ordinary way. The cotton goods sold at the store have probably been grown by the labour of negroes, and manufactured under the hardest rule of competition. If co-operation (so far as the stores are concerned) were developed to a point beyond the wildest dreams of its friends; if it absorbed the entire retail trade of the country, and there were no such thing as a shop left for rich or poor, it would still, for any direct effect it has, leave the "labour market" just where it found it, for not a single article would be *produced* (though all would be distributed) in a different way from heretofore. Hence a "store" as such, does not affect the true labour question directly. So that what we mean when we say that "co-operation" is a great movement, is that working men have devised a highly convenient and economic plan of buying their food and part of their clothing.

No doubt there is the whole *indirect* effect of this system, the freedom from debt, the accumulation of saving, the business experience, and all the countless other advantages which we have set forth and urged in preceding pages. No one can overlook them, and scarcely can exaggerate them. But these are in themselves purely economic arrangements of practical con-

venience, and cannot affect the social conditions of labour otherwise than as economic arrangements can. The practice of savings-banks is a highly useful economic arrangement, which has done a vast amount of good. So is the penny post. The ready-money principle is a valuable rule. The practice of accumulating savings, of not living up to one's income, the habit of regular economy, of giving a fair price for a sound article, as also the habit of early rising, are excellent bits of worldly wisdom to which the successful man often attributes his wealth. But these things, useful as they are, especially as contributing to a rise in life, are not vital movements of society or new revelations. They form merely the mode in which the capitalist classes have amassed their wealth, and they are often most conspicuously practised by men who have won and who use their wealth in the worst way.

The very men with whom labour has had the hardest struggle, are just those who exemplify the value of these rules. And it is significant that the men who are the most earnest advocates of this species of economic prudence, are just the men who are known as the most hardened followers of the barrenest schools of political economy, to whom Competition is a sort of social panacea and beneficent dispensation. It can hardly be that industry is to be regenerated simply by the working classes coming to practise the penny-wise economics of the getters of capital. It is much to be desired that this useful kind of prudence was more common. But if co-operation is to end in simply putting £5 or £10 into safe investments for working men, it is scarcely worthy of the fervent language which addresses it as a new gospel of the future, or of poems to celebrate its noble mission upon earth. We might as well expect them to be produced about a goose club.

There is no mystery about co-operation, nor, indeed, anything very original. Railways and joint-stock companies in general are simply co-operative societies; so is a goose club, so are all the clubs in Pall Mall. The new working-men's clubs are so still more, and this admirable movement possesses also a great many of the advantages of the co-operative system, and is free from some of its defects. In fact, wherever a number of persons join their small capitals into one capital, of which they manage to share the profit or the benefit (a system as old at least as the Romans), a true co-operative society exists. No doubt there are no companies (or very few) in which the subdivisions of shares are so small and the facilities so great as to enable working men to invest out of their savings. But that is only an accident. It is quite easy to conceive a joint-stock company with very small shares, for some petty local object, very much connected with the working class—and many land and building societies are thus connected —which would be (many of them now are) classed strictly as co-operative societies.

There are plenty of such little speculations, got up by pushing men of the people, owned and managed by them and their friends, which figure in the long list of the co-operative roll. They are very useful institutions, which bring a good dividend to the prudent investor—and so are gas companies. Now the "stores" offer a number of useful and incidental advantages which very few companies do. But in principle "stores" are joint-stock companies for the sale of food and clothing. As such they are doing a vast amount of good; but the industrial question is not solved, or even materially affected, because working men have devised and developed a very useful form of the joint-stock company system.

But as we have shown above, a man must be very short-sighted to see nothing more than this in the system as it now exists. There is a great deal more, only it is entirely subordinate and very indefinite. There is a widespread wish for social improvement, a spirit of self-sacrifice, and an unselfish enthusiasm which is very general in the movement. Gas companies do not subscribe to help each other in difficulties. Railway companies are not given to educational funds. Directors do not usually give their services gratuitously. Joint-stock companies' meetings, when they declare a dividend or dead loss, do not straightway sing a hymn, and appeal to each other, with tears in their eyes, to stand like men to the Limited Liability Act.

There is something in this movement not explicable by love of cash. But all this amounts to no more than that some very noble, earnest, and powerful spirits have thrown themselves into the movement. It is part of the social feeling and the strong sympathy which mark every effort of the genuine sons of labour in England, and, indeed, in Europe. But if it is a true part of co-operation at all, it is a part so indefinite, so ill-understood, and so very much disputed, that it cannot be said to be more than an adjunct. In itself, simply, co-operation is a joint-stock system for the association of small capitals. This has been practised by the rich for centuries, without any particular moral or social result. The prospectuses of new companies contain everything except homilies on the beauty of association. But the moral and social spirit which undoubtedly often accompanies co-operation is so very little defined, and is so devoid of any principle, system, or recognised rule whatever, that it cannot keep its ground beside the practical clear end of a good dividend. Co-operation may mean either

the making and saving of money, or the joint labour of all for all. It may also mean partly one, partly the other. But if so, the relative proportions and limits of these two must be determined. Until this is done, co-operation is a mere form of pecuniary investment.

Now this question is all the more essential because no candid friend of the movement can deny that it is one on which its supporters are wholly divided. Most societies have within them more or less distinctly two parties, the one the men who look on the system as an economic, the other as a social, instrument. The first are sincerely desirous to become and to see their fellows become small capitalists; and then, in the words of one of the addresses, "the great problem of social economy is for the working classes to keep themselves with their own money." These men look on anything else as Communism, and they are strict Political Economists. The other party fervently desire to see a system in which the share of capital in profit is reduced, and in which capital freely devotes part of its profit to labour; and these men are disciples of some kind of Socialist scheme, and very often previously Owenites or actual Communists. The latter are the more enthusiastic, the former are the better men of business. Both are useful, but they differ, as the discussions and divisions in the societies show. At present the economic school always carries the greatest weight and a majority of votes. The result is generally a friendly compromise; and an address which opens with a fervent call to the members to "elevate themselves by making money," closes with a motto in verse.

> Each for all, and all for each,
> Helping, loving one another.

There is, however, a certain poetic vagueness often

about the social element. Facts and acts are distinct; and, I believe, there is now no co-operative society existing which gives any substantial part of its income to *others than the members who share the capital.* There are, however, unmistakably two real sections in the co-operative world, and also in its friends: those who desire to see the privileges and power of capital extended to working men by their becoming capitalists; and those who desire to see working men relieved, by capital being deprived of much of its privileges and its power. These two parties, though quite friendly, are widely different, and at present, in the division list, the former have their way.

In the face of this great fact, which contains the key of co-operation as a social system, it is needless to consider the value of the general principles which are vaguely supposed to be connected with it. They can have no stability, for they do not rest on any accepted set of truths, or any recognised principle of action. One man writes to ask the *Co-operator* if Sunday trading is not contrary to the "true principle of co-operation." The editor of that useful and instructive periodical plainly considers that alcohol is; and he vigorously calls to order a "store" which ventured to sell beer. Of course, co-operation has no more to do with teetotalism than it has with Methodism.

If "co-operation" means a general term for all the moral and prudential virtues, or rather for what each man takes these to be, it means nothing. Nothing so vague can make any great effect. The thoughtful men amongst the working classes know well that for the permanent improvement of their order much more remains than that some should save a little money, and all buy cheaper and better food. Social wants require social remedies, and such things are mere delusions unless they are based on sound social

philosophy. Modern life is not so simple a thing that it can be reformed by prudent maxims, with or without fine sentiments. Nor is our industrial system so feeble a matter that it can be moved by vague professions of good-fellowship. Stripped of this, co-operation is one of the best, perhaps far the best of economic expedients for increasing the comfort, health, and happiness of the poor man's home; but as such it cannot claim to have solved or even dealt with the industrial problems of society. As a system under which labour is to gain a new position, and stand on fairer terms with capital, it has yet everything to do; for it has neither done nor even suggested anything tangible.

We have hitherto purposely kept out of view the real manufacturing societies. These *are* co-operative societies which are employers of labour. Here, then, the system does grapple with the position of labour and capital. But what is the result? As a test, the experiment is scarcely favourable. The manufacturing societies are extremely few, they are not yet exactly successful as speculations, and they do nothing but *pay the labourer his ordinary market wages.* They are chiefly flour-mills and cotton-mills. Now the flour-mills have paid large and regular dividends, have done a considerable business, and have been admirably managed, and of course have had their hard times. But these are not strictly manufacturing societies; they supply chiefly their own members and other co-operative societies, and may be more properly classed with the "stores." The amount expended in labour is extremely small compared with that for raw material and plant. They naturally employ at times workmen unconnected with the society; but I have never understood that mere workmen employed by them ever receive anything but the market rate of wages, or any particular advantage, privilege, or perquisite.

Nor do I think any societies in the kingdom remunerate their ordinary workpeople in any other way than the usual mode. Frequently these people are shareholders, but very often are not; and in any case the society, or rather company, wanting labour, goes into the market, and gives the price of labour as fixed by competition; just as a railway company does. The fact that the holders of the shares in the "store" or "mill" are for the most part (they are not always) real working men, is a very important and interesting fact; but it does not affect the conditions of labour, or add appreciably to the wages of their "hands."

The flour-mills apart—which are very successful and useful modes of making money—the other manufacturing societies are insignificant, until we come to the cotton-mills. Here and there an association of bootmakers, hatters, painters, or gilders is carried on, upon a small scale, with varying success. The plate-lockmakers of Wolverhampton (who have been recently carrying on a struggle with the competing capitalists so gallantly) are another instance. But small bodies of handicraftsmen (or rather artists) working in common, with moderate capital, plant, and premises, obviously establish nothing. The only true instances of manufacturing co-operative societies of any importance are the cotton-mills. During the great cotton fever which preceded the distress, several mills were started or projected. Some of them for a time seemed promising. The great Lancashire famine, however, came on them almost before they had got to work; and it would be impossible to draw any inference whatever from them. Some of the mills, however, never got to work at all. Some took the simple form of ordinary joint-stock companies, in few hands. Others passed into the hands of small

capitalists, or the shares were concentrated amongst the promoters.

There is now, I believe, no co-operative cotton-mill owned by working men in actual operation on any scale, with the notable exception of Rochdale. The Rochdale mill deserves consideration by itself. Rochdale, it is well known, is in a special sense the cradle of co-operation. As Mr. Holyoake tells us in his admirable account of its rise there in 1844, "Human nature must be different at Rochdale from what it is anywhere else." Its rise may be distinctly traced to the influence of Owenism, and some of its leading promoters there, besides being men of real industrial genius, are deeply imbued with many valuable principles which Robert Owen upheld. The Rochdale cotton-mill once bid fair to be an extraordinary success in a commercial view. Their buildings are not surpassed by any, and equalled by few, in the county; their management has been cautious and able; their credit stands in the money-market even higher than that of neighbouring capitalists; they weathered the storm of the cotton distress perhaps better than any, being almost the last to close and the first to open; and they are now running full time. They have, in fact, proved that it is quite possible for a cotton-mill (at any rate) to be worked on the largest scale, with a successful result, on the co-operative principle.

What, however, they have not proved is the possibility of a mill being wholly owned by those who work it, and of labour receiving more than the ordinary market share of the profits. The mill was founded on the principle of dividing all profits (after satisfying all expenses and the interest on fixed capital) equally between the shareholders and the workmen, every £100 received in wages counting in the dis-

tribution of the dividend the same as every £100 invested in shares. This principle was a real experiment to institute a new condition of labour. The mill had not worked long, however, before (in 1861) this principle, after a severe struggle, was abandoned, and no efforts of the minority, backed by many influential friends of the movement, have succeeded in restoring it. This, therefore, in the great home of co-operation, has for the present decided the issue. The question how to give the labourer a larger share of the profits has failed of solution. A body of co-operative capitalists, it is there seen, hire and pay their own workmen on the ordinary terms of the market, and under the rule of simple competition. This is the greatest blow, in fact, which the system has ever yet sustained, and is one which, if it cannot be reversed, stamps it as incompetent to affect permanently the conditions of industry. In spite of all efforts which faith, hope, and charity make to conceal it, this decision has planted a deep root of division amongst the co-operative body, and has broken the confidence of their most zealous friends. Some of the most active friends of the movement as loudly justify it as others loudly condemn it. And a long controversy has been carried on with great energy and no result. But a vote of the whole body of co-operators would undoubtedly show for the economic party an overwhelming majority.

But it may be said that, supposing co-operation distinctly to surrender or disclaim every thought of affecting the existing conditions and rights of capital, it is fulfilling a great mission if it enables the workmen to share the capital; and the Rochdale cotton-mill, although it does not divide its profits amongst its workmen, still pays them as shareholders, and in one way or other the workmen themselves obtain the

share of the profits, and gain the security and independence of an invested fund. Unfortunately this is not so. The shares of this mill are now in a very large proportion held by men who are not workmen in it, and not a small proportion is held by men who are not now working men at all. The number of shares owned by the ordinary "hands" is not sufficient to establish any very important principle. And until this is the case, and that permanently, nothing decisive is done. It is an instructive fact that a number of men who are, or have been, receiving weekly wages, should own and manage important cotton-mills. But as half the fortunes in Lancashire have been created by such men individually, there is nothing astounding in the fact that an association of them can do the same. Can it be regarded as the herald of a social and moral millennium that a large mill is worked by a company which consists of the managers, foremen, and principal workmen in it, of several well-to-do men who have been working men and have accumulated savings, and of some of the small shopkeepers of a town? Let all men save money that can, but society need feel no special enthusiasm at the fact that several hundreds of working men are able to retire upon comfortable incomes.

Now to that, be it said with all regret and soberness, the Rochdale cotton-mill seems tending under its present *régime*. If it has not reached it yet, it seems certain that in the course of time it must. The process is very obvious to any one who knows how these things work. A body of resolute working men, full of enthusiasm and self-reliance, start a manufacturing society together. The shares cannot, of course, be inalienable, which is opposed to all modern requirements. If the concern has only a margin of profit, they struggle on heroically, and often carry out their principle for a long time. But then the experiment

is of doubtful commercial success. If the concern thrives greatly and rapidly, the tendency of capital is to rush in and absorb the shares as a simple investment. Again, the shares naturally aggregate into a few hands. Both these tendencies are felt in all successful manufacturing societies. They have the greatest difficulty, and have devised all sorts of ingenious devices, with little result, to prevent them. But do what they will, the shares get more and more into the hands of men of some small capital. The nearer this limit is reached, the more completely does the concern become a simple joint-stock company. Some of the workmen suffer domestic privations, some are improvident, some cease work and bequeath their shares, and in countless ways the workmen cease to hold the shares.

The process is very rapid, and occurs under all conceivable conditions. Even if the strictest provisions existed, nothing can prevent capitalists at last owning shares,—or shares, at best, accumulating in the hands of the more fortunate or more skilful shareholders. And even if this were done, nothing can prevent the shareholders personally becoming richer men. A capital, we may suppose, of £50,000 is invested in a mill employing 500 men, who equally own the shares at the rate of £100 a piece. If trade is very good, and the profits as great as they used to be, each of these men, if he retained his own shares, and was very industrious, prudent, and economical—and to succeed most of the members must be this—will own in course of years several hundred pounds. Is it conceivable that a body of workmen, each owning, for instance, £500, will continue one and all at the loom and the spindle? Or would they when each was worth £1000? Certainly not. Why should they? Indeed, a man who has shown great aptitude in employing capital

and accumulating wealth, is impelled by every instinct of our nature, and habit of our civilisation, to say nothing of being probably bound by every claim of domestic and social duty, to devote his talent and energy to the employment of capital, and to cease to spend his life in running after a "mule." A working man begins to own a small capital; the qualities which have acquired it soon make it a larger capital (in Lancashire very soon); directly he is a real capitalist he ceases to be one of the employed, and becomes one of the employers; and as co-operation has simply enabled him to become a capitalist, and refuses to alter the condition of the employed, merely as such, the man soon becomes an employer of the ordinary type.

It is not worth much to say that these small capitalists, who have been actual working men, will know and feel the position of their workmen. Unfortunately the successful working men are not those whom their class have most reason to love. It is well known that the closest men of business are those who have risen from the ranks, whose formula is, "What was good enough for me, is good enough for them." And working men well know that if the hardest masters are the men who have risen out of their own order, the hardest of all is a trading company of such men. It does not appear that co-operative societies, as a rule, have very much to boast of in their treatment of their own workpeople. It will, perhaps, be agreed that at many stores the servants are rather closely and sparingly treated than otherwise. It is quite natural when we remember that their employers are men not accustomed to deal with large sums, or make gifts, or provide for others; are responsible members of a Board; that every detail is scrutinised, and every effort made to find the best dividend. There is a well-known case of a very flourishing concern

which was started by a few associated workmen as a co-operative society, which is now simply a company in a few hands, not a single workman owning the smallest share. It is notorious that this concern deals with its people (to say the least) not a whit better than surrounding capitalists. Yet this is nothing but a co-operative society which has been wonderfully successful. What would industry gain if keen-scented companies like this existed in every city of the kingdom?

Professor Fawcett (in his excellent Manual) thinks that the difficulty should be met by the societies making a rule of employing none but shareholders. This is plainly impracticable. If workmen who left the mill were compelled to sell their shares, they would cease to form or to give the privileges of capital. If workmen to fill their places were required, it would be impossible to insist that they should purchase shares. It would narrow the labour market to an impracticable degree, and no mill could work on such terms. And if it could, what an anomaly would be a society founded to ameliorate the position of the labourer which made a rule of refusing employment to any but those who had a sum of ready money in hand! Besides, how about the women and children? The majority of the work-people of a cotton-mill are women and children—wives, lads, and girls. But all these ("doffers" included) could hardly have shares, or at any rate could not exercise any freedom in them. The young folk and children unfortunately have not, as a rule, parents in the mill, and often have no parents at all. This is just the class on whom capital presses most hardly. To them co-operation offers nothing. In short, the idea of the workmen permanently owning the capital is illusory. As a partial temporary measure in a petty trade like an oyster fishery it may be

possible for the workers to own the capital and plant. In all the larger and complex forms of industry it is impossible. The owners of valuable property will not, cannot, and ought not to continue at manual labour for wages. Nothing can prevent co-operative manufactories from hastening rapidly to become simply trading companies. And the co-operative system, if it only enables a number of men to obtain capital, will do nothing by means of a few vague professions to touch the root of the evil—*the reckless and selfish employment of capital.* It will be a system which has its uses and its abuses, like the railway system or the banking system, but it will leave the moral condition of society, as these do, precisely where they are.

Hitherto the question of the capacity of co-operative societies for success has been kept out of sight intentionally. It is plain that the "stores" with reasonably good management and skill are certain of success, often of wonderful success. But, as has been shown, the success of men clubbing together to buy their own food and clothing is nothing at all. We can go much further. We may say that in many trades a body of workmen can conduct a business with entire commercial success. Where it is a case of exceptional profits, as in the cotton trade from 1858-1861; of very small capital or plant, as a body of painters, shoemakers, masons, etc. (such men are really artificers), where very much depends on the personal skill, care, and zeal of each individual workman, no doubt signal success is quite within their reach. Associations of the kind, well founded and honestly conducted, are worthy of every help and confidence. By all means let there be plenty such. But all this is a drop in the ocean of industry. If there is one thing which the progress of civilisation more continually develops, it is that the direction of capital requires entire freedom,

undivided devotion, a life of training, and innate business instincts.

All our complex forms of industry involve sometimes, in the directors, engineering or practical genius, a sort of instinct of the market, and a life-long familiarity with an involved mass of considerations, partly mechanical, partly monetary, partly administrative. The head of a great production is like the captain of a ship or the general of an army. He must have scientific knowledge, technical knowledge, practical knowledge, presence of mind, dash, courage, zeal, and the habit of command. It is all very well for working men to buy butter and tea prudently, and even to superintend the agents who buy it for them. But it is ridiculous to tell the hammermen at a forge that they can successfully carry on Whitworth's engineering business, or build the *Great Eastern*. Conceive the London and North-Western Railway managed by its stokers, porters, and ticket-clerks, or the Peninsular and Oriental Steamboat Company carried on by a committee of seamen, or the Bank of England managed by its ordinary cashiers! These are extreme cases, but they strikingly explain the real defect of the position. What is the limit? Where does the business become so simple that it can be managed by the mere workmen whom it employs? Arguments on this subject are almost ridiculous, were it not that the extravagant pretensions of some co-operators seem to call for notice. In a word, no sensible man will deny that the great industrial occupations would come to disastrous ruin were it not for entire secrecy, rapidity, and concentration of action, and that practical instinct of trade which nothing but a whole life and a very difficult education can give—and even that can give only to a few.

It profits little to argue that the bulk of the work-

men, though unfit to manage, are very fit to superintend the management. He who is unfit to manage is not fit to direct the manager. The only course open to inexperienced men undertaking a complex manufacture would be to trust themselves blindly to a skilful director. But if they do, they are simply in his hands, and the independence and value of their owning the capital is at an end. It cannot be turned both ways. Either the manager is controlled by the shareholders, in which case success is endangered, or he is free, and then they lose responsibility and practical power to affect the management. You cannot *buy* the inspiring authority any more than the electric will of a great military or political chief. It is impossible to *hire* commercial genius and the instincts of a skilful trader. Nor must it be forgotten that the success of great trading companies proves nothing. They are companies of capitalists, the large majority of whom are by the habits of their lives trained to the skilful employment of capital, and versed from childhood in the ways of trade. And even these men practically entrust the whole management blindly to a few great capitalists among them, any one of whom might very well own and direct the whole concern. The fact that an association of *capitalists* can manage a gigantic interest does nothing to prove that an association of *workmen* can. A company of merchants, naval men, and financiers, whose whole lives have trained them to it, can manage the Peninsular and Oriental undertaking. Does that prove that a company of able seamen could?

But this is to repeat for the hundredth time the objections against Socialism and Communism. There is no need now, or in this country, to expose the unsoundness of these. But co-operation, whilst sharing in many of their defects, wholly forgets the

high aims which make these systems noble in their errors. The great-hearted and misjudged enthusiasts who taught them, really grasped the industrial evils in their fulness, and resolutely met them with a cure. They saw that the root of the evil was the extreme power and selfishness of capital. They met it by destroying the institution of individual property, or by subjecting it to new conditions and imposing on it new duties. In Communism, where labour and capital were alike devoted to the common benefit; in Socialism, where labour and capital are radically re-organised, whatever else of evil they might contain, the relative condition of the labourer must certainly have improved. But co-operation is a compromise which reduces none of the rights of property and imposes on it no new obligation. Starting from the same point as Socialism—the anti-social use of capital, and the prostration of the labourer before it—it seeks to remedy all its consequences by making more capitalists. It faces all the risks which beset the subdivision of capital amongst a mass of inexperienced holders, and then does nothing to guarantee more justice in the employment of that capital in the aggregate.

The subdivision of the capital, after all, is a mere mechanical expedient. It must be temporary. The aggregation of capital, the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the more skilful, is one of the most elemental tendencies of society. The prudent *will* grow rich, the rich *will* grow more rich. It is, in truth, one of the primary truths about human labour. Communism boldly says—Let none grow rich. Co-operation simply says—Let more grow rich. After all, how very small is the number whom it can permanently make capitalists.. All cannot grow rich. It is puerile to suppose that all can have the advantages

of capital; for if all had them, the advantages would cease. Or at least, since they would all share capital most unequally, their relative position is not much altered. The weak now go to the wall, and so they would if the strong had the means of getting stronger. It is easy and most desirable that every family in an industrial town should club to buy food, and have £20 at interest in the "store." But if the entire industry of the country were started on the co-operative system, in a generation the shareholders would be a small minority, and certain knots of them would doubtless develop the most formidable industrial tyranny which modern Europe has seen.

Hereafter, we are always told, co-operation will develop the true plan of admitting labour to a share of the profits. It may be; but no one of the elaborate systems of Socialism has stood critical examination. The attempt to apportion exactly that share which is the *right* of labour, and that which is the *right* of capital, has always ended in absurdity.[1] To apply mathematical formulæ to social and political questions is the surest test of a low education. What arithmetical ratio ought property and numbers to hold in government? What is the value of this man's or that class's vote? Such are the crudest of metaphysical puzzles, and the arithmetically *just* share of labour in the profits is one of them. Clearly the share, whatever it should be, varies in every trade; it varies in every operation, it varies to each workman. It is a common idea that equity would consist in sharing equally between labour and capital, every £10 of capital receiving the same dividend as every £10 of wages. But why equally? The ancient philosopher says "the vulgar think that that which is equal is

[1] See interminable discussions in the *Co-operator* on this hopeless problem.

just." But it requires a disquisition on the elements of society (which are very differently estimated) to show why in abstract justice the £10 of labour expended in making a piece of cotton is the fair equivalent of the £10 of capital which bought the material and machinery. All that can be said is, that it is the market price — the conventional measure. But this is the measure of that very industrial system which is declared to be *so radically unjust.*

Minds that do not delight in these metaphysical will-o'-the-wisps will, on reflection, see that there is no more ground to say that the just share of labour is half than that it is double, or a third, or a tenth. What is the just share of a successful general in the plunder? What is the just share of the painter of a picture, and the man who wove the canvas and ground the colours? Generals win battles in spite of bad soldiers, and soldiers win battles in spite of bad generals: what is the share of each in the result? A capitalist of consummate skill makes a business thrive in spite of every opposition; a reckless capitalist ruins the most promising business. And if labour and capital share equally, what becomes of talent, so justly considered in Fourierism? Who is to estimate the share which mechanical genius, instinctive sagacity, and personal ascendency *ought* to secure for a masterly trader? All sorts of ingenious rules have been suggested to determine this just share mathematically, and each is a fresh absurdity. The whole subject is a quicksand which defies measurement. The proportion depends entirely on the point of view which is taken as most important in civilisation. One who values intellectual power will think justice gives the larger share to the controlling mind. One who is impressed with the importance of capital will award it to property. And he who sympathises with the

sufferings and privations of manual toil will give it to labour. But it is of less importance to consider what proportion of profit co-operation will give to labour, because at present in England it does not give any.

But if we suppose the just relative shares of labour and capital fixed by some sort of inspiration, they would not long remain just. The proportion must be fixed by some consideration of the difficulty which there is in finding one or other element. In a given undertaking, the relative importance of the capital and the labour might be mathematically taken as equal, and the proportionate value ascertained. But suppose the available labourers doubled in number, or the available capital halved. Some regard ought to be taken of the new importance of capital, when so many more needed it, or there was only half as much of it. But this is only to fall back on the old rule of competition, of supply and demand. £10 worth of labour is only equal to £10 worth of capital, at the present market rate; if wages improved, £10 worth of labour would become £15 worth of labour, and so on. £10 worth of agricultural labour, in Dorsetshire, means twenty weeks of good farm-work; in Yorkshire, it means ten weeks; in New Zealand, it means five weeks; in Saxony, it means fifty weeks. Which of these is *just*? But £10 represents nearly as many ploughs and spades, loaves and coats — though not quite—in all. The labourer's wages usually fall when he is in distress; his £10 worth of labour may become £5, without any fault of his own, and though he work still harder. But the £10 in capital never fluctuates so quickly or so greatly. That is to say, the share which the system of justice gives to the labourer will be least precisely when and where he most needs it. Surely this is competition systematised under the mask of equity!

Or, suppose no regard is paid to the difficulty of obtaining capital or labour—which, after all, is competition, supply, and demand—and it were attempted to apportion, by abstract justice, the share of labour and capital—how should we proceed? Capital results from saving—that is, abstinence. How much abstinence is equivalent to how much labour? And then, what sort of abstinence and what sort of labour? Under what conditions, over what period, and so forth? The abstinence of a nobleman who saves £10,000 a year out of £20,000 is not heroic virtue; but it is a great power, and represents the labour of 300 men for a year. The whole thing is a pedant's puzzle. We attempt to measure in figures the relative values of labour and capital, and we come at once to the old conventional measure—the market standard. We adopt it, and we incorporate with our system of justice all the injustice of competition, and we stereotype all its evils. The noble enthusiasts who taught Socialism at least saw this, and they determined to meet it by reorganising society, and imposing new conditions on property. Each fresh difficulty drove them to fresh safeguards and more ingenious regulations. The world now knows the utter failure of these visions of a society drilled like a regiment and tutored like a school. But with all their errors and their follies, they never thought that the just claims of labour could be settled "by algebra." They saw that there are but two ways in which labour and capital—or say, rather, the human faculties and efforts—can receive their proportionate shares: by competition, or by a radical revision of the mechanism of the whole social system.

There is one other consideration (and it is of the utmost importance) which co-operators usually overlook. In a plain, thriving business—as in the cotton

trade before the American war, when profits were certain and large—it seems a very simple thing to divide the profit equitably. But what if there is no profit, or a dead loss? Under the rule of abstract justice, it does not seem quite clear why, if a business is working at a dead loss, the very wages should be paid. Yet, to give capital its due, however great its losses, it pays the market rate of wages to all whom it employs. Now, in striking the just balance, something ought to be allowed to capital for this liability, since it has to bear *all* the loss. And yet, how is the risk, the chance of dead loss, to be estimated? If any arrangement is devised which is to throw the loss on labour, then labour ought to have a voice in the management; and we should have co-operative mills managed not only by committees and meetings of shareholders, but joint committees and meetings of the shareholders, and their workmen and workwomen. But co-operators are not prepared for this, for this is Socialism, and a distinct invasion of the rights of capital.

Working men, perhaps, are a little disposed to undervalue the constant and enormous losses which capital has to bear. How many a business, ultimately thriving, has run at a dead loss for years—a loss which, if thrown on the workmen, would have brought them to destitution. Now, capital can stand these great fluctuations just because it is capital—*i.e.* a reserve; but the fluctuations of the labourer's income, just because he has only a reserve in rare cases, unsettle and derange his daily comfort and his domestic life. These losses, when averted, are often averted by the personal sagacity and energy of the capitalist, which it is impossible to estimate in figures. The whole life and soul of a difficult business (as of a difficult campaign) often depends entirely on the skill of the chief; and he would be crippled if he were a subordinate

manager. There is a great deal more resemblance than is often supposed between a military association and an industrial one. The successful direction of combined human effort requires very similar conditions, whether the activity takes the form of killing an enemy or of making steam-engines. It is as illusory to apportion the just share of the capitalist to the profits, or to subject his action to his subordinates, as it would be to put an army into commission, and direct it by a Board and an assembly of common soldiers.

Nor is the industrial question simply one of money. Labour would not be helped simply by awarding it a new share of the profits; many labourers would use it just as improvidently and unluckily as they do their present share. The main and the just complaint of labour is, not that it has too small a share of the profit, but that it is too often exposed to the exorbitant power of capital, and the oppressive use of that power. All know that there are very many ways in which the capitalist can hold the labourer gripped in a crushing system, whilst remunerating him largely. Some of the best-paid occupations — that of colliers, coal-whippers, tailors, and excavators — receive very high wages, although often suffering the most systematic oppression. Wages are frequently enormous where "truck" is a dominant institution: the money question is often the least part of it. Nor would any system which simply added to wages, and left capital with all its power, do much to establish equity. Justice is not done to the unprotected labourer simply by giving him more money, if every power and right which capital possesses to oppress him is left untouched. The evils which fall hardest on labour are —irregular work; overtime; exhausting, unhealthy, and dangerous work; fluctuations in earnings, place

and hours of work; forfeits; personal, domestic, and private oppression; want of leisure, justice, and protection. All these, which Unionism provides for, Co-operation leaves untouched; and as to overwork, rather stimulates than reduces it. Co-operation concerns itself solely with the re-distribution of capital and its produce. For the employment and the duties of capital it has not a word.

Capital has its beneficent as well as its sinister side. It is a power for good far more than for evil; and if co-operation too often forgets the formidable power of aggregate capital, whether owned by many or by one, by rich or poor, it too often puts out of sight the noble functions which capital in a single hand can exert. As the possession of vast and free capital in a single skilful hand enables it to be used with a concentration, rapidity, and elasticity which no corporate capital can enjoy; so in a conscientious hand it is capable of yet more splendid acts of protection, providence, and beneficence. There is nothing chimerical in such a supposition, and nothing degrading to those who benefit by it. It does not consist in the giving of money or the distribution of patronage. A great, free, and wise capitalist—and England happily can show some of the noblest examples—whose mind is devoted to the worthy employment of his power, can in countless ways, by advice, help, example, and experience, promote the welfare of those about him, raise their material comfort, their domestic happiness, their education, their health, their whole physical and moral condition; can act almost as a providence on earth, and that by means as honourable for them to receive as for him to use.

Every one knows that some of the largest estates, and some very large manufactories in this country, are now successfully carried on in a spirit which provides

in a very high degree for the welfare of all concerned. The feeling of honest pride, confidence, and goodwill with which these efforts are met on the part of tenants and workmen, is as elevating to them as it is to their employers. It would be a perversion of mind which could see anything mean in so noble a relation as this. It would be preposterous to suppose that the sense of duty could be as lively and personal on one side or the other, where the capital is owned by a company. No responsible manager of a society could feel or venture to show the same munificent care for his people that many landlords and many manufacturers now do. No association could or would be ever voting sums for those benevolent purposes which the conscientious capitalist carries out day by day. As little could it do so as the Board of Admiralty could inspire the sense of sympathy and devotion which binds a captain like Nelson to his men. This is a conviction almost as old as society itself, which it needs more now than some phrases about "Self-Help" and "Mutual Co-operation" to eradicate.

Socialism, it is true, and still more Communism, did claim to substitute for this spirit another as strong, or even stronger. But that was by boldly reconstructing the social system, by instilling new habits, and instituting a moral education. But the bastard Communism—of breaking capital into bits—which some advocate as true co-operation, leaves the whole force of these sentiments out of sight. It weakens the power of capital for good far more than it weakens its power for evil. The morality and education of capital it passes by. It subdivides it, but does nothing to elevate it. Right, useful, necessary often, as the principle of association and co-operation is, indispensable as it may be as an adjunct and resting-point, it will still remain as true as ever, that on any large scale,

and for the highest uses, concentrated and not associated capital will command the greatest practical success, and develop the most noble moral features both in employer and employed.[1]

It may be asked, is there any need so closely to criticise a spontaneous economic movement which has an obvious practical value? Is it necessary again to repeat objections against Socialism as a system? The answer is that there is real need for it. The co-operative system is so great a success that any illusions about it would be very dangerous. It is now absorbing men of such high qualities and influence, that if not well directed it will prove positively pernicious; and especially so, since it is being advocated with such exclusive claims and such extravagant language as befit only a new social system. The present writer yields to none in his warm sympathy and respect for the movement as regards the "stores" and associated artificers. He knows and has seen how very much good it is doing. But that good is wholly dependent on its true limit and use being understood, and he has long seen with regret that some of the very best leaders and friends of the working classes are throwing themselves exclusively into it, as if it were a new gospel, destined to revolutionise the conditions of industry. As apply-

[1] It will be seen that no notice is here taken of the system originating in Paris, advocated by Mr. Mill, and adopted by Messrs. Briggs and Messrs. Crossley, in which a portion of the profits is freely given by the capitalist to the labourer, or a share in the capital is made over to him. This, the most hopeful fact in our industrial system, the best of all schemes of industrial improvement, is not co-operation at all. It wants every feature of co-operation. It is not self-help by the people, for it is a wise and spontaneous act of munificence from the capitalist. No efforts of the labourers can advance its introduction. The capital is not subdivided, but remains practically in one hand. The management is not democratic, but remains also in one hand. The labourers are not partners, and have no control for good or evil over the concern. It is the free gift of a bonus to the labourer—a wise, a just, and a promising system—but not co-operation (1865).

ing on any large scale to manufacturers, it seems to the writer a feeble echo of Socialism, with many of its defects and few of its ennobling aims. On this side it is a crude compromise between the claims of labour and of capital—the hybrid child of Plutonomy and Communism.

Things which are very good and useful when quite spontaneous, become very bad and noxious when fanned into a movement and preached as a revelation. The Temperance principle has done good service; but as a Teetotalist fanaticism it does positive harm. It is a most useful thing and a most hopeful fact, that many working men's families should have a small saving for a rainy day. But there is no need for special exultation that a great many working men become shopkeepers or small employers. And a true friend of labour may well listen with dismay and disgust to the appeals of an organised propaganda "to save society by making money." There exists unluckily a systematic agitation which has developed a special cant of its own, by which the working men are beset, the burden of the cry being, Save—economise—accumulate—grow rich. "I do beseech you," cries a co-operative lecturer, "to unite yourselves together, with the determination to benefit yourselves by laying out your money to the best advantage." This is but the spirit of a thousand addresses, tracts, and articles. There has grown up an entire class of professional agitators, from whom nothing solid or practical is ever heard but exhortations to make money, and hints how to make money quickly. It is a good thing to grow rich—honestly and naturally. But to preach, implore, and excite men to grow rich is a very bad thing.

It used to be said by them of old time that the love of money was the root of all evil. Foolish as this was, it is hardly true that money is the root of all

good. I do not scruple to say that this is too often the tone of the professional propagandist, and that much of his teaching is morally debasing. There is not one moral standard for the rich and another for the poor. And to teach and preach to the poor the paramount duty of getting money is as demoralising as to preach it to the rich. A little money, if they come by it in natural course, may be useful and essential to their well-being; but for them to be always thinking of making a little, and then of making that little more; ever to be dealing in shares, dividend, or interest; to believe that by so doing they are working out their own "elevation" and their orders' regeneration, would be a pitiable self-delusion. For this reason there is no modern movement more full of moral danger than this. The temperance, the educational, the club movement, all have and advocate a definite moral object. The co-operative easily degenerates into the basest material end. Material efforts are no less necessary than moral efforts,—for the moment are often more so; but only in so far as men recognise and remember their temporary and subordinate uses.

The co-operative advocate will insist that many incidental objects, many moral precepts, are invariably united with the material aim. It is so, and the movement would be a poor one indeed if there were not this union. But co-operation must stand or fall by that which is its direct principal purpose. A material aim is a good, provided it keeps its place. And the direct, main, and only accomplished object of co-operation, as a system, is to make money. This is but slightly modified by the incidental aims; and its character is not changed by vague appeals to good feeling, by social celebrations, by devoting 1 per cent out of dividends for education, by opening a reading-

room, and by subscribing £5 to the *Co-operator*. None of these rest on any defined principle, are in the least systematic or generally accepted, or have been ever worked up into practical standing rules. They are just as compatible in theory with a railway company as with a "store." The shareholders of any business, if they were good-natured people, would do as much and more. What co-operation does teach emphatically, consistently, perpetually, and ably is how to make a thriving business. It has worked out an admirably ingenious and prudent system of rules to increase dividends and to reduce expenditure. As a commercial system, it is a masterpiece of sagacious contrivances, and rests in principle on the plainest and most consistent logic. By this alone can it claim to be a system. What it has not yet done is to produce in twenty years one plain case of labour being employed on juster and more favourable principles than it is, or indeed on any principles but those of competition; or even to elaborate or suggest any rational scheme for employing labour on new conditions, or for placing the use of capital on a sounder and higher moral basis.[1]

[1] A curious proof how little co-operation provides or suggests on the grand industrial question of making the *use* of capital consistent with social obligations, may be found in the following catechism, printed in the *Co-operator*, as part of a lecture, by its indefatigable editor, Mr. Pitman, the most active and most eminent of the co-operative apostles:—

CO-OPERATIVE CATECHISM.

"*What is your Name?*

"Co-operation.

"*Who gave you this Name?*

"My godfathers and godmothers, the Rochdale Pioneers, by whom I was made prudent, provident, and persevering.

"*What did your godfathers and godmothers do for you?*

"They did promise and vow three things in my name: First, that I should renounce 'the public,' and all its ways, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, that

If this is true, working men will not long trust implicitly in a system which however useful is very partial and essentially subordinate. They, of all others, know the social consequences of a systematic spirit of money-making. Co-operators are fond of homely proverbs, and they may well reflect on the value of a specific which consists "of a hair from the dog that bit them." They are also fond of an apologue, and may think of one of the most ancient and the wisest of all apologues—the immortal fable of the "Belly and the members." Would it be a rational remedy for disorder of the digestive system if the members were, not to starve, but to parcel out the stomach *in bits amongst them*? All the social misery which is caused to the workmen by the rage of amassing capital is not likely to be extinguished by a

I should believe my own principles. And, Thirdly, that I should act as if I did, by keeping down expenses, buying in the cheapest market, and giving no credit without ample security.

"*Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and do as the Rochdale Pioneers have promised for thee?*

"Yes, verily: and by the reciprocal help of the shareholders and other customers I will; and I heartily thank my northern friends that they have called me into this happy condition, through the instrumentality of their principles. And I hope to illustrate those principles by continual practice unto my life's end.

"*Rehearse the articles of thy belief.*

"I believe that honesty is the best policy; that 'tis a very good world we live in, to lend, or to spend, or to give in; but to beg, or to borrow, or get a man's own, 'tis the very worst world that ever was known. I believe in good weight and measure, in unadulterated articles, in cash payments, and in small profits and quick returns. I also believe in the maxim 'live and let live'; in free trade; and, in short, that my duty towards my neighbour is to love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me.

"*What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of thy belief?*

"First, I learn the folly of being a slave, when I may be free. Secondly, I learn to save my money, as well as earn it. And, Thirdly, I learn how best to spend it."

This is sensible advice with a few copybook saws worthy of a village schoolmaster; but it is not a system of social justice, or a system of anything (1865).

few hundred thousand workmen becoming small capitalists. There is nothing in co-operation *per se* which is to prevent a thriving co-operative company from consisting of the most selfish and unscrupulous men on earth. Capitalists by the very conditions of human nature will not be day-labourers. And the fact that 10 per cent of the working men should raise themselves out of their class by ceasing to be labourers is an evil rather than a good. The working man who does so is generally no favourable specimen of his order. The facilities and taste for this species of rise in life, this displacement of class, form a very real evil. They are generally bought at the price of true moral and mental development. Regularity and security of position are the conditions most favourable to the welfare and elevation of the working man, not a rage for speculation and visions of possible wealth. Let him consider the following words of Comte:—"Governments, whether retrograde or constitutional, have done all they could to divert the people from their true social function (participation in public life) by affording opportunities for individuals among them to rise to higher positions. The moneyed classes, under the influence of blind routine, have lent their aid to this degrading policy by continually preaching to the people the necessity of saving: a precept which is indeed incumbent on their own class, but not on others. Without saving, capital could not be accumulated and administered; it is, therefore, of the highest importance that the moneyed classes should be as economical as possible. But in other classes, and especially in those dependent on fixed wages, parsimonious habits are uncalled for and injurious; they lower the character of the labourer, while they do little or nothing to improve his physical condition; and neither the working classes nor their teachers should encourage

them. Both the one and the other will find their truest happiness in keeping clear of all practical responsibility, and in allowing free play to their mental and moral faculties in public as well as private life."

What, then, are our practical conclusions? They are these: that the co-operative system, as applied to the retail of food and clothing, and to small bodies of associated workmen, is a most sound, strong, and valuable method of adding to the material well-being of the working classes. As such it deserves all good-will and confidence, and undoubtedly has a large and bright future of usefulness before it. But co-operation, as spreading grand social truths, or as applied to large capitals and complex industries—in a word, to Production—has not stood, and will not stand, its ground. As a social system, it has developed nothing that is not at once crude and vague; and the earnest spirits amongst the working and educated classes (often of some shade of Socialism) who support it on this ground, should reflect that it has done nothing to grapple with the problems that Socialism propounds; that it has done and taught nothing definite, except how to buy well and how to save money. As applied to the higher manufactures it is doubtless capable, in special cases, of a very large measure of success, and may often in the battle of labour prove valuable, as a temporary rampart and refuge. It will probably always remain side by side with individual capital, as a vigorous rival and check. Success, however, necessarily alters the character of co-operative manufactures, and extinguishes their social purpose by converting the workmen into simple shareholders.

Co-operation is deeply rooted, and may now prosper by itself. To fan it into factitious activity may prove a dangerous social nuisance. The Gospel according to Mammon will preach itself, and can do

without the assistance of philosophers and reformers. The working men and their advisers who are really bent on social progress, well know that this comes only of a truer civilisation, of a more vigorous morality, of a wider education, of a deeper moral tone, of healthier domestic life, more temperance, unity, moderation, self-respect amongst employed, more sense of duty, more justice, more benevolence amongst employers, more sympathy and unselfishness amongst both. Were a higher education of mind and feeling universal amongst workmen, they could elevate their own condition indefinitely. Were it universal amongst capitalists, *they* would do so spontaneously. Moral and mental education then, and a systematic promotion of it, and a power to concentrate and direct opinion, is the one thing truly needful in this and in all other social wants. This is the true "self-help by the people," and not the making of dividends, and compound interest on capital. This is the only means by which the working classes can elevate themselves, and it is a fraud to tell them that Co-operation offers them this in any serious or regular way. Everything that puts this out of sight, and blinds men to its paramount importance, is an evil. It is because Co-operation seems tending to do so, that the writer has criticised it as unreservedly and openly as he has previously criticised capital. If Co-operation were ever to supplant, in the interest and hopes of working men, these other and far higher requirements, it would become a real source of social demoralisation. In itself it is good, provided it be natural, and provided it keep its place. But far other things are needful on which Co-operation can offer nothing definite, or only as a make-weight. These things, co-operators may be told, they ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone.

IV

SOCIAL REMEDIES

(1885)

In the year 1884 Mr. Robert Miller of Edinburgh, a retired engineer, proposed to hold a public representative inquiry into the causes of Industrial Distress and possible remedies. He offered £1000 for the expenses of such a Conference in London, to embrace politicians, capitalists, statisticians, workmen, and delegates from many Unions, Co-operative and Industrial Societies, Socialist and Reformers' bodies. Together with many Economists, Unionists, and Labour Associations we organised a Conference of more than one hundred delegates, who met during January 1885 in the Prince's Hall under the Presidency of Sir Charles Dilke.

The question proposed was as follows :—

Would the more general distribution of Capital or Land, or the State management of Capital or Land, promote or impair the production of wealth and the welfare of the community?

A variety of papers were read and discussed by men representing nearly all the various forms of Economic and Socialist schools, by men as widely separated in opinion as were Mr. Arthur J. Balfour and Mr. John Burns, as were Lord Brassey and Professor Francis Newman and Professor Alfred R. Wallace.

From the volume entitled The Industrial Remuneration Conference, *which reported all the papers and the discussions, I extract my own address, which embodied the views on the Labour problem of our Positivist School (1908).*

We have before us two methods proposed for the reorganisation of the industrial system :—the first, by the more general distribution of Capital and of Land ; the second, by the State management of Capital and of Land. These two plans are in violent contrast with each other. The former is merely an extension of the present social system, multiplying the holders of private property, imposing on private property no new checks or duties, proposing nothing subversive of our ordinary habits, and nothing but what is common in many countries in the Old and New World. The second plan involves an entire revolution in the social system ; it would abolish, or at least recast, the oldest institution of civilisation, private property ; and it proposes an industrial system which probably has never at any time been at work on any large scale on the face of the earth.

But before we can properly consider any large scheme for the reorganisation of our industrial system, we must first be prepared with at least a general answer to the wider question : "Does our industrial system need to be reorganised at all?" I shall simply indicate my own answer to this question, and shall then consider the two alternative proposals for reform ; giving in each case results, conclusions, and general estimates, the outcome of my own experiences and studies. I have now for twenty-five years occupied myself with these industrial problems in their various phases, in personal contact with the movements and their leading exponents or directors : trades unions, workmen's clubs, benefit societies, co-operation,

industrial partnerships, land nationalisation, socialism, communism. Time does not permit me to enter into details or systematic review of arguments. I shall seek only to lay before the Conference my final conclusions and suggestions.

"Does our industrial system need to be re-organised?" or in words which originated this Conference, "Is the present manner whereby the products of industry are distributed satisfactory?" I cannot myself understand how any one who knows what the present manner is, can think that it is satisfactory. To me at least it would be enough to condemn modern society as hardly an advance on slavery or serfdom, if the permanent condition of industry were to be that which we behold, that 90 per cent of the actual producers of wealth have no home that they can call their own beyond the end of the week; have no bit of soil, or so much as a room, that belongs to them; have nothing of value of any kind, except as much old furniture as will go in a cart; have the precarious chance of weekly wages, which barely suffice to keep them in health; are housed for the most part in places that no man thinks fit for his horse; are separated by so narrow a margin from destitution, that a month of bad trade, sickness, or unexpected loss, brings them face to face with hunger and pauperism.

In cities, the increasing organisation of factory work makes life more and more crowded, and work more and more a monotonous routine; in the country, the increasing pressure makes rural life continually less free, healthful, and cheerful; whilst the prizes and hopes of betterment are now reduced to a minimum. This is the normal state of the average workman in town or country, to which we must add the record of preventable disease, accident, suffer-

ing, and social oppression with its immense yearly roll of death and misery. But below this normal state of the average workman, there is found the great band of the destitute outcasts — the camp-followers of the army of industry — at least one-tenth of the whole proletarian population, whose normal condition is one of sickening wretchedness. If this is to be the permanent arrangement of modern society, civilisation must be held to bring a curse on the great majority of mankind.

Is the relative area of this extreme misery growing wider or smaller? Is the normal state of the average workman growing better or worse? Is the general lot of the upper ranks of the workmen rising or falling? Taking England and our own generation only, I have little doubt that there is some improvement in all. The proportion of the utterly destitute is distinctly, however slowly, diminishing. The average workman, on the whole, has gained in money-values a real advance. The fortunate minority of the most highly skilled workmen have gained very considerably. The figures arrayed by consummate economists are far too complete to be doubted. But then this question is by no means settled by figures. After all has been said as to the rise of wages, as to the fall of prices, as to the cheapening of bread and other necessaries, there comes in a series of questions as to housing, as to permanence of employment, as to the general conditions of life in cities ever more crowded, and in country ever more and more enclosed, as to the nature of industry in the sum. These are questions that cannot be settled by statistics and comparative tables. It is impossible to balance a gain of 2d. on the quartern loaf against the growing unhealthiness and discomforts of an increasing city. No one can say if another 1d. per hour in wages is the equivalent

of increased strain in the industrial mill. No one can exactly value all the rush and squeeze of modern organised industry against the personal freedom of the old unorganised labour.

These things one has to judge in the concrete, and my own judgment is this: the fortunate minority have gained, even in the sum total, at least as much as any other class in the community; and they are in the ascendant, in the way to gain more, both positively and relatively. This is due mainly, I hold, to their trades unions and mutual societies. The average majority of workmen have, in the sum total, gained a little; but far less than the rich or the middle-classes. And that little has been gained at the expense of some evils which are hardly compatible with civilisation. The destitute residuum is, if relatively diminishing, positively increasing in numbers; and, under the pressure of modern organised life, is in a condition of appalling barbarism. Taking the general condition of the producers of wealth as a whole, it is improving, but somewhat slowly, and even the improvement is of so moderate a kind, and is accompanied with evils so menacing to society, that the future of civilisation itself is at stake. And herein I join hands with very much that is said by the earnest men of the genuine Socialist schools, so far as they point out the evils and dangers of our actual system.

In particular, I heartily sympathise with the critical portions of Mr. Henry George's writings, especially in his latest work, *Social Problems*. That book seems to me a very powerful, and, in the main, a very just, exposure of the evils of our industrial system; though I look on his pretended panacea as chimerical and futile. But Mr. George, whose genius and courage I cordially admire, has introduced one very important consideration. He has proved, or rather directed our

attention to this, viz., that the evils long familiar to all in the industrial system of Europe are already in full operation in America and other new societies; that they grow up with wonderful rapidity within a generation under conditions utterly different from those of Europe; that they are found in primitive communities, in democratic republics, in societies where virgin soil, unbounded liberty, limitless space, social equality, and an absence of all traditions, restrictions, or hindrances whatever, leave an unorganised crowd of free men face to face with Nature. It is impossible, therefore, to attribute these evils to Government, social institutions, laws, or historical conditions. They are the direct growth of modern industrial habits; and they develop with portentous rapidity directly industry finds a field wherein to organise itself, even in the most free and the most new of all modern societies. Mr. George, I say, has shown us that the evils of our industrial system are the direct product of the industrial system itself.

This spectacle of the growth of free industry in America affords a sufficient answer to those who call out for absolute freedom from State interference. In the United States we have State interference at its minimum, and the freedom and independence of the individual citizen at its maximum. And this seems precisely the field where industry breeds the evils of the industrial system with the greatest rapidity. It is here, where the State does the least, and where the individual is most independent, that we have colossal accidents, gigantic frauds, organised plunder, systematic adulteration, the greatest insecurity of property and of person, and commerce fast reducing itself to a science of swindling. This should be enough to warn us that it is impossible to make an absolute principle of the doctrine of non-interference. Where the State can

usefully interfere, and where it cannot, is for each society a matter to be discovered by practical experiment.

The sticklers for absolute respect for Liberty and Property have not the courage of their doctrines. If they are logical they should ask for the abolition of all legislation against truck, dangerous structures or practices, unhealthy buildings, oppressive regulations, and fraudulent devices of any kind. They ought even to call for the abolition of all inspection, all compulsion, all monopolies, and all State manufactures, or even regulation of industry in any form. Cab-drivers would be free to charge the unwary what they pleased; girls and boys would be ill-used in any way short of open violence. The population would grow up a prey to small-pox and all infectious diseases; the children would be untaught; salesmen would be free to falsify their weights and measures, and to adulterate their goods without check; sailors would be drowned, pitmen blown to cinders, and trains wrecked entirely at the mercy of certain owners; and we should have to forward our own letters, and (why not?) protect our own houses ourselves.

Society would be dissolved in the name of the sacred rights of self-help and property. The limits of age, sex, or special industry have no abstract force, apart from convenience. If it degrades a man to have State protection, it must degrade a woman; if it is good for a young person of 14 to be under compulsion or inspection, it cannot be so evil for a young person of 18 or 20 to be so also. If there be any absolute doctrine of non-interference, the age of 12, 14, 17, or 21 cannot override it; nor does a factory girl of 16 differ so much from a factory lad of 16, or even of 21. Once show a few cases where State control has certainly made industrial life a little more human, and

checked some forms of misery, and the abstract doctrine of non-interference is blown to the winds. But cases of successful State control abound in all societies, and notably in ours. The rule of *caveat emptor* is perfectly observed only by savages.

I turn to the first alternative proposal, the more general distribution of capital and land. No one who knows the working man, so to speak, at home, can doubt how great an advance in well-being and independence is the possession of a little capital, a bit of land, however small. Only those who do know him at home can truly judge how great an advance it is. The workmen of such cities as Rochdale, Halifax, Huddersfield, Leeds, Newcastle, and Oldham, where the unions, the co-operative, building, and benefit societies are in strong force, are in an altogether different world from that of the average town and country labourer, who on a Friday night is the owner at most of a few shillings and five pounds' worth of old furniture. The co-operative societies, with their twenty-six millions sterling of annual sales, are only one and the best known of the many agencies. The trades unions, with their large reserve funds, and their accident, sickness, and out-of-work benefits, are but another mode of securing to workmen some of the advantages of reserve capital. All the various forms of insurance and benefit societies, the land and building societies, do the same.

The prudent, energetic workman of our northern industrial districts, who can afford to take advantage of all the mutual benefit associations available to him, may be said to be in a position of something like security and comfort. If he is sick, out of work, or meets with an accident to himself or his tools, he is not forced to pawn his bedding; when he is superannuated, he is not driven to the poorhouse; when he

dies, he is not buried by the parish. He gets wholesome food, good clothing, and furniture at wholesale prices; he has a good library and club, a night school, and an annual holiday; and he comes to be master of a house and garden of his own. This is the bright side of the picture; but of how few can it be said to be true! Perhaps, at the most, of 5 per cent of our total working population; and of that 5 per cent almost the whole are factory artisans, who alone, by their higher wages and the employment of whole families, can afford the needful weekly subscriptions.

With the rural labourer the story is very different. How rare is the case where he owns anything, or has the remotest hope of ever owning anything! Every ordinary misfortune of life — sickness, accident, infirmity, old age—to him means simply parochial relief, charity, the workhouse. He drinks poisonous water, eats bad and adulterated food, lives a life without rational amusement, without freedom, without hope. Compare the British labourer with the peasant owner of France, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, or America, and he appears to be at the opposite pole of comfort and independence. It would be wasting time to multiply proofs that the more general distribution of capital and of land does promote the welfare of the labourer. Every means which contribute to that end are, in my judgment, an unmixed good, whether they take the form of co-operation, trades unions, benefit, building, insurance, or joint-stock societies, or peasant occupation and holdings. Nay, I go much further, and I insist that until the working man—whether in town or in country—has at least as much possessory interest in his home as an average middle-class man now has, and until he can count on so much capital, or its equivalent, as will keep him (if needs be) from destitution for a

year at least, the first conditions of civilised industry are wanting.

But the question before us is whether the reorganisation of industry and the welfare of the community are to be found in a general distribution of capital and land. And here we are met by two irresistible facts. The first is, that the universal tendency of organised industry, rural or urban, is towards the massing, and not the dispersion, of capital. The highly specialised subdivisions of all modern production, the increasing use of complex machinery, and the greater economy of all aggregate operations, make the massing of capital more and more essential to efficient production. In America and in new societies, even more than in the old, the same causes are at work. Increased concentration of capital is an indispensable condition of modern successful industry. Even in rural England, where the concentration of estates seems almost to have reached a maximum, the consolidation of farms goes on ; the big industry is driving out the little. The ancient controversies as to great and little culture of land have now ended in this : that for the largest production of cereals and stock and for the highest scientific farming the big-scale culture at least is indispensable, even if the ownership be subdivided.

In urban industry no room is left even for debate. Collective industry has almost extinguished individual industry. Factory production has swallowed up home production ; the spinning-wheel, the hand-loom, the village workshop, are now the bows and arrows of modern industry. The middleman, the chapman, the small trader, the petty manufacturer, the private banker, the small builder, the village store, are every day superseded by big companies, central agencies, or big capitalists who are consolidated companies and agencies

in themselves. In the face of this universal law of modern industry, a law the more conspicuous the more free and virgin be the field of industry, how idle would it be to look for any regeneration of the industrial system to a natural dispersion of capital or land! In the teeth of universal tendencies such as these, it is rather unnatural to struggle for a revival of the equable distribution of capital and land which marks the ruder types of society.

The second objection is a result of the first. As a fact, the possession of capital and of land is reached only by an insignificant fraction of the labour population. After all has been allowed for the work done by trades unions, co-operation, benefit societies, and the like, it touches only a fortunate few. Even the most flourishing and progressive of these movements hardly advance more rapidly than population and the general wealth of the community: in other words, they barely hold their own. Trades unionism may now be said to be, as an efficient movement, about fifty years old; co-operation is forty years old; most of the mutual-benefit movements are in their second or third generation. It is time that the enthusiasts of each recognised the very narrow limit of their real work. They practically affect the fortunate minority alone. Ninety per cent of the labour population scarcely feel any direct benefit from them.

Co-operation, in particular, has a melancholy failure to acknowledge. Too much has been made of the fact that a small fraction of the labouring classes (600,000 or 700,000 all told) have learned to buy their tea and sugar in economical ways at stores and clubs. There is no social millennium in this. Co-operation started forty years ago with a mission, to revolutionise industry, to abolish the wages system, and to produce by associated labour, so that the

labourer should share in the profit of his labour. Over and over again the effort has been made to start true co-operative production, all workers sharing the profits. Over and over again it has failed. It has been a cruel disappointment to the noble-hearted men who forty years ago, and since, have hoped that they had found a new social machine, to see these hopes ruined by the indomitable force of personal interest and the old Adam of industrial selfishness.

One after another all types of co-operative production worthy of the name have disappeared. Here and there a few associated artisans or artists struggle on in a small business where capital is hardly needed. In 1883 the united profits of all productive societies in the kingdom were less than £15,000. This does not count the flour-mills, which are merely a form of *store* for the convenient supply of food. What a drop in the ocean of the total earnings of the working classes, £500,000,000, is this annual profit of £15,000! But co-operative employers usually, like other employers, give little but the market rate of wages, and secure the best dividends they can. Why should they not? they ask; for they are poor men, trying to rise. Why not indeed? Only they make it plain that co-operation is simply a name for a joint-stock company; and the idea that it is about to reorganise modern industry is now an exploded day-dream.[1]

Trades unionism, which I have known intimately for twenty-five years, is an even more important and efficient engine of industrial improvement, mainly because its indirect influence is at least as great as its direct influence. A trades union usually benefits indirectly quite as many non-members as members,

[1] In 1883, the aggregate dividend paid by these productive societies in England was under £5000. About £100 was devoted to educational and charitable purposes, about twice as much to labour, apart from capital or purchases. In 1900 the dividend to *workers* was £20,545 (1908).

sometimes perhaps twice as many. A powerful trades union often improves the condition of the whole trade. But, at the utmost, trades unions substantially affect only the minority. Of the twelve millions of earners, certainly not one million are in union. In one or two of the most skilled trades, the unionists are the majority; but, taking the whole labouring population of these islands, the unionists are a mere fraction, the aristocracy of labour. Nor is this fraction now relatively growing. Trades unionism, in the sum, is not an advancing movement.

In two generations now it has shown itself utterly powerless to reach the residuum, or even materially to combine the great average mass. In spite of all the creditable efforts made by the larger unions, and by the annual congress and the like, unionism in its average, and certainly in its lower, types tends rather to sectional and class interests; it divides trade from trade, members from non-members; and especially it accentuates that sinister gulf which separates the skilled and well-paid artisan from the unskilled labourer, and from the vast destitute residuum. Our industrial competition forces these classes into permanent antagonism. Unionism too often deepens this antagonism into bitter and unsocial war.[1]

It is vain indeed to expect the permanent reorganisation of industry from any one of the movements which tend to the more general distribution of capital or land; nor is there any reasonable probability that this will come about naturally. The steady logic of facts is towards the concentration of capital and not its distribution; and all the movements for promoting that distribution but touch the topmost layers; they scarcely affect the mass, and do

[1] The New Unionism and Socialism have now much changed this (1908).

nothing for the lowest state of destitution. They leave the general organisation of the industrial system exactly as they find it. They do almost nothing to moralise it, to infuse into it a new spirit; and they distinctly decline to revolutionise the industrial system itself. Trades unionism indeed, the best and by far the most powerful of these agencies, is a strongly conservative movement, and depends for its activity on the actual industrial system as it is. Compared with the gigantic and deep-seated evils of our present society, these various schemes for the general distribution of capital are mere palliatives, stop-gaps, and insignificant experiments. Nine-tenths of our working people, nine-tenths of their wages, are hardly affected by them at all.

I turn to the various proposals for the State management of capital and land, that is to say, to the nationalisation of the soil, and Communism pure and simple. There is nothing particularly new about the proposals of Mr. Henry George. In the last century, Thomas Spence, in Newcastle, proposed very similar theories, and the Spencean clubs of that period were quite as vigorous as the land nationalisation societies are now. Mr. George has, however, given the discussion a new interest by his eloquence, passion, and his experiences of the new societies across the Atlantic. I have already expressed my admiration of Mr. George's genius and energy. And I will add this: his dealing with the land question has drawn attention to some important truths, so valuable that if all the rest of his arguments were worthless, this would still make him one of the most vigorous social thinkers of our time.

The greater part of his criticism of our present distribution of wealth is right in principle, even if exaggerated in statement. He has abundantly proved

that it is not due to any special conditions of English society, law, or institutions. He has thrown fresh light on the danger of permitting to the owners of the soil in cities the absolute disposal of its surface and the buildings on it. And in particular he has done admirable service in insisting on the necessity for a genuine land tax. I am prepared myself to go with him so far as to see a fifth at least of our national income raised by a tax on land and ground-rents, as is usual in most other civilised communities. But all these proposals are part of the accepted programme of all radical reforms. And Mr. George has done nothing to put them into practical and workable form.

When, however, he goes on to represent the appropriation of the soil in private hands as the cause of all social misery, and the State confiscation of the soil as the panacea for every ill that afflicts society or the working poor, no wilder sophism was ever uttered by a sane man. I will not, in a serious gathering of cultivated men, waste a word on his invocations to the will of God or the rights of man. Rant of this kind is more fitting to a negro camp-meeting than to an industrial inquiry. I come at once to what I hold to be the central error of all land nationalisation theories whatever. It is assumed in all—

(1) That property in land is something different *toto cælo* from any other kind of property.

(2) That property in land represents a mere legal right, nothing of real value apart from its arbitrary and fictitious value.

(3) That property in land retains its value without any act or expenditure on the part of the owner.

(4) That there is some mysterious wickedness about ownership of the soil, some social mischief which is not at all shared in by mere permanent occupation of the soil.

Every one of these assumptions is false. The appropriation of the soil rests on precisely the same grounds as any other appropriation. If there is anything wicked and socially mischievous in private property in land, the same wickedness and mischief exist in any other private property. The former is the appropriation of an immovable and the latter of a movable; but there the distinction ends. There are things far more rare than the soil, and quite as essential to human life. The appropriation of all the salt in India, or of all the coal or wood in England, would create a monopoly far more formidable, and would sooner make the monopolist master of the community than any possible appropriation of the soil. Raffaelle's pictures and ancient statues are far more rare than even the soil of these islands. And fuel, ships, or iron are quite as necessary to existence.

If property becomes sin, when extended to things of which the supply is limited, the ownership of diamonds, coal, antiquities, and ancient manuscripts must be even more unholy. To lay down a social law that no one shall own anything which is much wanted by others, would apply in turn to almost every subject of property. Food, building materials, horses, minerals, even books and newspapers, become in certain societies and under certain conditions, things of special desire, and suddenly enrich the fortunate owners. The unearned increment applies to everything in turn. The window of an attic which commands the view of some historical scene, the house in which Shakespeare lived and died, the *Times* newspaper with the account of the battle of Waterloo, suddenly become a fortune in the hands of some lucky owner. It is as much or as little criminal to own them as to own a bit of soil. If rarity and a general desire to possess them make

things incapable of appropriation, the rule should apply to thousands of things besides land.

Immense nonsense is afloat respecting "the unearned increment." The unearned increment is the result of civilised society which gives special value to various things, quite apart from any act of their possessors. In a besieged city the fortunate holders of food, in a war the possessors of ships, saltpetre, guns, and the like, suddenly find that their property has "an unearned increment." The buyers of the first edition of the *Modern Painters*, Turner's *Liber Studiorum*, or Tennyson's poems, are in the same case. Those who have bought a piece of land in a spot where a town begins to rise are in precisely the same position. It may be quite right for the State to prevent the possessors of the soil from hindering the free development of the town. But why should the State confiscate the "unearned increment" of the piece of ground, and not the "unearned increment" of the book, the grain, or the saltpetre?

Nor is it true that land is a positively limited thing. There are still boundless tracts on the earth's surface not actually occupied. Land is in no sense so limited as wood, iron, coal, salt, not to speak of Greek statues and illuminated manuscripts. And in each country, even in ours, the quantity of cultivated and useful land is a constantly fluctuating amount. The land in practical occupation is now probably one-fifth more than it was fifty years ago; and perhaps one-twentieth less than it was ten years ago. The land of any country in actual occupation varies from year to year very largely, far more than iron, coal, wood, or old books and pictures vary in amount. At this hour, there are millions of acres of the soil of these islands which are perfectly at the service of Mr. George and his friends, at a rental of 1s. an acre,

if he likes to lease them, and to convert them into good farms. It is untrue that the soil even of this island is all allotted out and closed for ever. There are millions of acres still to be had which might be made perfectly serviceable to man at an outlay of so much per acre. What is lacking is the capital or the labour willing to convert them. For practical men well know that to convert these waste lands into farms would involve a ruinous loss. It would not pay one per cent. Why, then, should the "State" be required to make an outlay which is certain to prove a ruinous loss?

This brings us to the point that property in the soil represents not a bare legal right to exclude others, but the actual expenditure of capital and labour. The underlying fallacy of Mr. George is to think that land is a thing like the sea, and raising produce from it is a simple process, like catching fish. There are exceptional cases and extreme limits. But an ordinary farm is as much artificial as a house or a factory. Good farm land in England is the work of enormous outlay and labour. In its primitive condition it was moor, swamp, thicket, or sandy wilderness. Perhaps not a twentieth part of this island in its original state (Mr. George would say as God made it) was of any use at all to man. There is hardly an acre of cultivated land in England which has not been made cultivable by a great outlay of labour and capital. It has really been as much built up as a railway or a dock. Immense tracts of fine farm land have been in this very century slowly won from a state of barren wilderness by continuous labour and the enormous expenditure of capital. The whole of the corn lands recently gained from the open down and moor, forming large parts of eight or ten southern and south-western counties, the vast and fertile regions

in Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, and other North-Eastern counties, redeemed from salt-marsh, fen, and swamp, have been made quite as completely by human industry as a ship or a steam-engine.

It is idle to repeat sophistical platitudes that God made the earth, but man made the ship or the engine. The ship and the engine are merely materials found on and in the earth, worked into useful forms, and arranged by human industry to serve man's wants. So is a farm. No farm in England is in the state in which it is supposed that God left it at the creation of the earth. It has been worked up and rearranged by human labour extending over centuries. The farm is also, like the ship or the engine, a mass of the earth's materials so changed and placed that it can grow food. Apart from that labour, an acre, say, in the Bedford Level, or on the Wiltshire Downs, would be as perfectly worthless as an acre on the top of Snowdon or on the Goodwin Sands. It is certainly immovable, whilst an engine or a ship, under conditions, and with great expense and labour, is movable. But this is a mere incident. A ship stranded is also immovable; and so is an engine, in the absence of capital to move it.

Hence we find that large portions of the soil of England have every quality possessed by other purely personal property, which Mr. George does not propose to touch. Even he would be scandalised at a proposal to confiscate the ships and engines built and owned by private persons, on the ground that their material was simply a portion of the earth's soil, which no man has a right to appropriate. Society judges it wise to guarantee property in ships and engines to those whose capital has procured them to be built, in order to encourage citizens to employ their savings in a way useful to the community. On precisely the same

grounds it guarantees property in the Bedford Level to those whose capital has procured it to be made.

The Bedford Level is no doubt an extreme case. But it is only a matter of degree. Hundreds of thousands of acres in England have been made by human toil, skill, and capital, quite as completely as the Bedford Level was made out of tidal swamps. To a very great degree every cultivated acre in England has also been so made. Clearing of timber and brushwood, of stones, weeds, and other growths, draining, fencing, damming, bridging, making roads, barns, farmsteads and the like, ponds, wells, watercourses, and the hundreds of works without which the land could not bear produce—these costly operations were necessary for every farm alike. If the people, by God's law, have a right to God's earth, they can only have a right to that earth in the state in which God created it.

Let us assume that Mr. George is right, and that we agree to hand back the soil to the people. It would be grossly unjust to hand it back to them in any other state than a state of nature. Assume that we could replace it in that state, in the state, say, in which Julius Cæsar saw it when he came over from Gaul. This island then consisted of pathless tracts of jungle, fen, moor, wood, and heath. The valleys of the great rivers were periodically under water; the estuaries on the coast were boundless salt fens; the uplands were sandy or stony wildernesses; there were only two or three varieties of tree, four or five very common herbs, and about as many coarse wild fruits. It would be impossible for any but hunters and coracle boatmen to get about the country; there would be hardly any food for man or cattle; neither man nor beast could live anywhere except on patches here and there, mostly in aquatic villages or on detached and stony hills. At the utmost, one-twentieth of the soil

could be used for human produce, and that only in the rudest way for a few necessaries. Nineteen-twentieths of the soil would be as absolutely useless for human food as Dartmoor and the Wash are now. That is the condition in which God gave the soil of England to the people of England; and that is the condition in which they should, by God's law, receive it back.

To seize it, after centuries and centuries of labour have been, by man's law, expended in utterly changing its very face and nature, would be monstrously unjust. We have lately by legislation remedied what most of us hold to be a cruel injustice to Ireland, where the labour which A had put into the soil was confiscated by B. In Ireland, the mountain-side and the bog had often been won into cultivation and usefulness by the incessant labour of some tenant, or perhaps squatter or bare occupant. Mr. George has justly inveighed against the outrageous injustice done, when the farm so reclaimed by the labour and capital of the peasant was claimed, plus its improvements, by the mere owner of the soil. We heartily agree with him. On what ground? Because we find it unjust that the men who may fairly claim the soil should plunder, along with the soil, the visible result of another's labour and capital. In England it is not the occupant but the owner, or those whom the owner represents, who have expended on the soil that labour which alone has made it useful to man. Mr. George, therefore, is going to do in England exactly what he and we find so monstrous in Ireland. Granted that the soil of England belongs to the people of England. Then he is calling on the people of England not only to seize the soil, but to confiscate the enormous wealth representing the outlay by which the soil has been transformed. He is going on a colossal scale to repeat the

injustice which in a very minor form we have just redressed by legislation.

Some schools of land nationalisation propose what they call compensation on this confiscation. What they propose is, however, no compensation at all. It is not, and never can be, any kind of equivalent for the capital expended. The strict prairie value of agricultural land in England would hardly amount to one year's rent. The improved value, representing capital expended in making the prairie cultivable, would usually exceed twenty years' rent. It may be doubted if £2,000,000,000 would go any way in making the soil of England what it is to-day, supposing that it were in the state in which Julius Cæsar, or even William the Conqueror, found it. The idea that the owners of the soil simply represent a parchment-right granted ages ago by some sovereign or paramount authority is almost too ridiculous to discuss.

There is perhaps not a single enclosed and cultivated acre in England on which human labour has not been expended and paid for far in excess of many years' rent; it would be easy to show that in some spots forty, fifty, even a hundred years' rental would not cover the loss and outlay sunk in making it fertile. We ought to calculate, not merely the bare clearing, draining, and enclosing the particular farm, but the whole of the permanent works needed to make any given district cultivable as it now is—the vast and ancient operations of dyking rivers, estuaries, and watercourses, the road-making, bridge-making, and planting, the sum of those labours which make an English county so utterly unlike the same soil in the days of the Heptarchy.[1] It is as great a difference as

[1] The works here spoken of are all the beneficial constructions for the permanent improvement of the soil, made at the cost of successive

that between a frock-coat and a sheep's fleece. Mr. George might as well claim the coats off our backs, on the ground that God made the sheep, as the farms which have been made by human capital and skill.

It is idle to seek now to unravel all the titles to every plot in England. The notion that the soil of England is held to-day under grants made by Norman and Tudor kings is obviously childish. It would be easy to show that an immense proportion of it is now held by the assigns of those who paid hard money or money's worth for it. Somebody gave or paid for the labour; and it would be as idle to trace back the heirs of the original labourers as it would be to find the men who made our coats, or the heirs of the bricklayers who laid the walls of our houses. In civilised society the legal ownership of an article is assumed to represent the value given for the labour expended on it. If every man were liable to have his coat confiscated off his back, unless he could show that he had paid his tailor, that the tailor had paid the clothier, that the clothier had paid the farmer, that the farmer had paid the shepherd, and so on *ad infinitum*, civilised society would cease to exist. There is no more reason in land than in anything else for calling on the legal owner to show that he has personally paid the value expended in making the article, be the article coat or farm. As a matter of fact, a very large part of the soil of England has been acquired for value given within recent generations.

Even the estates of our peers, whose Norman names excite Mr. George's democratic sensibilities, have usually been acquired, directly or indirectly,

owners of the land. They do not include high-roads, bridges, or other works paid for by the parish, the county, or any public body. Every one knows that in every large property there are occupation roads, bridges, dykes, and other works necessarily paid for by the proprietor.

through purchases by capitalists or marriage with the children of capitalists. It was amusing to read Mr. George's denunciations of the London estate of the Duke of Westminster, which he told us was a grant from a Norman king. Everybody knows that it comes by inheritance from a worthy yeoman, who farmed his own estate, and left it in due course to his grandchild. The grandchild's descendant about a hundred years ago obtained a title. But the right of the Duke to the soil is precisely the same as Mr. George's right to anything which was left to him by his grandfather. There are no Norman kings in America, and no land-laws made by an aristocracy. And yet precisely the same evils of land monopoly exist there, we are told, and the same policy of confiscation is recommended.

Who are the people of England to whom God gave the soil? Are they the descendants of the aborigines, of the first occupants, of the Britons, Saxons, or the mediæval yeomen? Have not the Welsh, the men of Cornwall, the Highlands, and the West of Ireland the best title to the soil of their ancestors? And in America God certainly gave the soil to the red-skin; and by the law of divine justice one would think that New York, Boston, and Chicago should be restored to the remnant still left in the Indian reserves. Absurd panaceas can only be properly exposed by pointing out the absurd consequences which logically they involve.

Not only does the owner of a farm represent those who have expended capital in creating it, but the farm would soon cease to exist if the owner did not continue to expend capital in keeping it going. Next to the fallacy that the landlord has done nothing to make the land, comes the fallacy that he does nothing to maintain it. An ordinary estate requires

periodical expenditure, amounting at the lowest to ten per cent of the rental, often twice, thrice, or four times as much. Official reports from one of the great estates in the kingdom show that in sixteen years nearly three-quarters of a million sterling has been expended. Of late years much of this outlay has been incurred along with a reduction of rents. It may well be that much of this expenditure is in permanent improvements which will ultimately represent increased value. But in England an immense proportion of this expenditure has nothing to do with profit or speculation. It is voluntarily made by the duty or pride of ownership, just as parks and gardens are kept up without any view to profit.

Farmhouses, farm buildings, cottages, schools, churches, clearings, plantations, and model farms are placed on the soil by rich landlords out of their capital. The country gains largely by this; and the reason that so many parts of England are cultivated like gardens or home farms is that the owners, having immense capital from resources other than agricultural rents, are able to indulge their pride or their sense of duty by expending enormous sums in improving and beautifying their estates. One landlord in 16 years spent in farms, cottages, etc., £290,000. Another, in 3 years, £60,000. Another, in 17 years, £30,000 (rental reduced). Another has, in 10 years, received £50,000, out of which he spent on the land £43,000 without increased rental. These improvements are all in country estates, and in different counties.[1] Instead of the great peers carrying off the

[1] These cases have been given to me privately, and in each case with exact figures supplied from the agent's office. They belong to a large class of English properties which are owned by men of great wealth and managed on liberal principles, without any idea of exacting the maximum rental. They are not at all the strongest cases to be found. The entire rental of some large estates is expended on the property. I know

rentals of their farms to be consumed in extravagance, the farms are often kept in their present high condition because vast sums acquired elsewhere are poured into them. I am certainly not prepared to utter one word in defence either of our landed system or of our concentration of land in a few hands, least of all in defence of the unsocial extravagance of the rich. But on the whole I believe that great landlords in England administer their estates with more sense of public duty than bankers or merchants employ their capital.

On the whole I estimate that an annual sum of at least ten millions is needed to keep our agricultural land at a high level of condition, in building, draining, fencing, clearing, planting, in roads, dykes, watercourses, bridges, and so forth. In a country changing so rapidly as ours, and with daily advances in scientific farming, this outlay is required to keep abreast of the general progress. Were this not expended the fertility of the land would rapidly deteriorate and ultimately cease altogether. Any large tract of ordinary country left to itself for a generation would return to a state of nature, and in two or three generations it would be as uncultivable and as uninhabitable as the moor or the fen of our ancestors. An ordinary estate requires a continual expenditure of capital to keep it going, just as a ship, or a railway, or a cotton-mill.

The sole justification of ownership of the soil is that this is done by the owner. In England it is done by the owner, and, on the whole, done well. It is

myself of two properties owned by millionaires, one of £13,000, the other £4000 a year, from which for years past no income has been taken off the land. I cite these cases not to claim any merit for the owners, nor as a defence of the landlord system, but to prove a plain economic fact, viz., that a large proportion of the estates in England are managed without any reference to pecuniary profit, and that immense sums are, as a fact, annually spent in improving the land by the owners. The question whence that money comes is a perfectly distinct issue.

well done mainly because the soil of England is owned by men, very many of whom are rich apart from their rentals from farms. If an annual outlay of ten millions be taken (for illustration) as the amount required to keep our agricultural land in a high state of productiveness, I shall assume that no less than fifteen millions is annually expended on it now, if we include every kind of outlay—churches, schools, cottages, model farms, houses, gardens, plantations, of every kind: in fact, all that is not accomplished by public taxation.

Where is this ten or fifteen millions annually to come from if the State confiscates the soil? To throw it on the occupant or farmer is to overburden him, already unable as he is to stock or work his farm from want of capital. He will have, as now, to pay his rent or land tax to the State. Otherwise the State will derive no benefit from confiscation, and will simply make a present of the land to the farmers. But if the farmer, besides paying his rent, is to find the annual outlay for repairs and improvements, none but capitalists, or the nominees of capitalists, will be able to farm. Hence, the ten or fifteen millions must come either from the State or from land banks. If from the State, then a large slice of the State's new land tax will be cut off. And what a prospect of State intervention, jobbery, and mismanagement is unfolded by a scheme which puts every farm under the direct management of the State; which substitutes for all the land agents and landlords in England a huge department at Whitehall which would have to give an order before any gate, barn, or ditch in the kingdom could be repaired.

It has been suggested that the difficulty is met by leasing the State land at a lower rate. This does not meet the case. In the first place, the State will have

to see that the sums required for improvements are actually expended. That would involve minute and constant inspection, followed by eviction in case of default. What an endless source of discontent such a system involves! Again, a large part of the expenditure now made by great landlords is far in excess of what a public department could or would exact from farmers with small capital. Yet if that expenditure is sacrificed the country, at any rate the land, would be the loser. Lastly, a large, irregular, and occasional expenditure, which is easily borne by a great capitalist, is not so readily met by a farmer without capital. A farmer, now paying £200 a year rental, needs, we may suppose, a new house, buildings, and appurtenances, to cost £2000. A landlord easily finds that sum. It is a very different thing to call on the farmer to find it, even if his rent be reduced from £200 to £100 per annum. The seamen who navigate an ocean steamer could not find the capital to work it, even if their wages were £500 a year.

Suppose, on the other hand, that the State declines so gigantic and so unpopular a task, and that the ten or fifteen millions is found by financial corporations —land banks of some kind. That is to institute a vast system of mortgage over the face of our country. Mortgages are bad enough when created by a landlord; they are far more ruinous when the farmer or peasant is indebted. The State would be the mere overlord, receiving the true rent under the name of land-tax, as in India or Egypt; and the cultivator—call him peasant, farmer, or lessee—would be the bond-slave of some money-dealer, who would be his mortgagee and practical master. The place of landlord would be taken by some banking company in London.

This is what happens always where the cultivator

is without capital, and yet where he has himself to find the sums periodically needed to keep his land in condition. This is why the Egyptian fellah, the Indian ryot, the peasant in Russia and Eastern Europe generally, is the bond-slave of the money-lender. Even in France, Belgium, or America, where the peasant has unusual qualities of industry and thrift, the poorer class of farmers are bowed down by mortgages and loans. How could it be otherwise? No magic will get rid of the need for constant outlay to keep the land in condition; nor will any magic supply the small farmer—call him what you will—with the capital needed. At present he can hardly buy his stock and implements. How is he to find, then, ten or fifteen millions more, if we abolish the landowner, who now finds this sum? He can only find it by borrowing; and the lender will be more or less master of him and of his land.

Suppose that, by a short Act of Parliament, the payment of rent were abolished, within a generation the present farmers, who, as a rule, have neither large capital nor the habit of accumulating a large capital, would be deeply in debt for the sums required to renew buildings and develop cultivation. Where there is need for continual outlay of capital, borrowing is the only means by which a class without capital can meet that outlay, however easy be the terms on which the holders may get the land. The land question is a question of capital. No legislation can create capital where it does not exist, and where the habit of accumulating does not exist. But the nationalisation scheme does not pretend to abolish rent. It only converts rent into land-tax; that is, it changes the persons to whom rent is payable. The landowner system is a device for getting capital on to the land. If we abolish the landowner, then, as the farmer has

not adequate capital, it must come either from the State or from lenders.

The English schools of land nationalisation usually proclaim as their aim the formation of a number of small farms leased from the State, with fixity of tenure —in fact, the legislative creation of a system of permanent peasant occupation. There are great social advantages in peasant proprietorship, and in any system where the actual cultivator is in free possession of the soil he tills. I am wholly convinced that to occupying ownership, without legal limitation on the extent of the holding, we must ultimately come. But the questions before us are these: First, can we create such a system at a stroke by legislative compulsion? Secondly, in order to do so, need we start with such a tremendous revolution as abolishing property in land? Thirdly, when we had done it, would the advantages (apart from the dangers and evils) be at all commensurate? To these three questions I answer, No!

If every rural labourer in England were suddenly by law declared the absolute owner of ten acres, other conditions remaining unchanged, within a few years the productiveness of the soil would be reduced by one-half, and in a few generations large properties would be again the rule, and the bulk of the labourers would be in a state of dependence. It is impossible, in a country like ours, to force society back into the primitive simplicity of Switzerland and Norway, even if it were desirable. It is useless to make peasant proprietors or independent farmers by law, until both have the habits and the capital needed to work such farms or holdings to a profit. Then, when we had "planted our people on the land," we should at most have provided for one million of earners out of our twelve millions of earners, for if the holdings were too

small, production would be arrested. How should we have improved the condition of the other eleven millions of earners? To hope that we should have abolished wages, even in agriculture, is an illusion. There is not a country in the world where the wage-receivers do not exceed the proprietors tilling their own land. And in a system of peasant ownership the wage-receivers are often worse off than elsewhere.

If our soil is to be well cultivated, the lots—call them farms, properties, or holdings—could not, at the outside, exceed a million, and would probably be quite small enough if they amounted to half or a quarter of a million. If these lots are to be well tilled, some one must have full control over each, call him peasant, farmer, owner, lessee, or occupant. Unless such occupant has permanent tenure, with full power to transmit to his assigns and successors, he will not put capital into the land. Unless he has capital of his own he must borrow it. When he is a systematic borrower he will cease to be a free proprietor. And when financial rings hold under mortgages the soil of England, we shall simply have established for the landlords whom we see, and who (in England) live on their estates and usually take some pride in them, invisible money-dealers living in distant cities. What is there in all this to transform industry, reorganise our social system, and offer a millennium to the thirty-five millions of these islands?

Our English schools of land nationalisation adopt the principle merely in name. Mr. George proposes a genuine Communism, so far as land is concerned. If his scheme is to have the grand social results which he claims, he must abolish all property in the soil as an institution. It is, according to him, from the sinful institution whereby plots of God's earth are nefariously allotted to private persons in full control that poverty,

bad trade, rotten finance, injustice, fraud, and even prostitution, spring. But the practical result of our English land nationalisation movement is, not to abolish, but greatly to strengthen this malignant institution, the appropriation of the soil. The English schools seek to make many more persons the virtual masters of the soil. Nationalisation, in their mouths, is reduced to a phrase. The State is to be declared sole proprietor. Well, that is nothing ; such is now the law of the land, a law acted on daily, when land is taken under the compulsory powers of a thousand Acts of Parliament. But names apart, the new allottees of the farms or plots will be quite as much proprietors, in the anti-social sense of the term, as the Norman barons who now own them.

Unless the allottees have permanent occupation, with fixity of tenure, and freedom to transfer, charge, and devise them, the land cannot be properly worked. Some persons or other, by a law of nature, physical nature and human nature alike, must have full control over the soil, unless it is to waste and go to ruin as land does in Turkey or Persia. But permanent occupation, with fixity of tenure and freedom of assignment, is proprietorship in other words. It will exercise over society all the same effects. The new allottees will accumulate estates, and in a few generations will be just as selfish, tyrannical, and indolent as the Norman barons. They will be just as much the enemies of the human race. Why not? We shall have changed the persons of the proprietors ; but how shall we have changed the proprietor nature? Instead of Lord Wolverton, a London banker, or Lord Ardilaun, a Dublin brewer, who care little for the rentals of farms, we should have got a dozen small capitalists who had saved money in iron, and a dozen

more who had prospered in coal, butter, or mutton, and who are not likely to be easier landlords.[1]

In what I have said I do not by one word accept the actual land system as satisfactory, or our present social condition as tolerable. I am as eager as any Socialist to transform our landlordism as a permanent institution and to find a higher standard for our general industrial life. I see certain great advantages, chiefly economical and material, in our present system of landed estates; but I am very far from believing that these counterbalance its grave social evils. But these are to be dealt with, I hold, by the class of measures long advocated by all schools of radical land reformers. I am as anxious as any man to see a large body of peasant holdings freely springing up on our land. I look for a large body of working farmers, with permanent interest and complete freedom in their own farms. And I see social and moral evils of the worst kind in any system which practically severs (as ours does) the ownership of the soil from any responsibility to superintend its cultivation. That is to say, there are grave evils to society where estates in the mass are simply leased or loaned for hire like money. These evils, however, can be remedied by a reform of the land laws, by abolishing all the legal and social privileges peculiar to the ownership of land, and by a resolute scheme of land taxation.

Under such a system of reform it would simply not pay to be the nominal owner of a great estate.

[1] In Professor Newman's paper, "written on behalf of the Land Nationalisation Society," he says: "The aim of our society is to establish a state of things in which small independent plots of land shall be procurable everywhere." As the aim to be reached, he speaks of farms "being multiplied through peasant freeholds." Now to maintain such a system in England, even if it could be created by law, two things are absolutely necessary—(1) limitation by law of the size of holdings, (2) prohibition against sub-letting. Both of these conditions are impossible. To attempt them would lead to an unendurable tyranny.

A great estate would become a mere burden, and not a very honourable one, except where a man of vast wealth might choose to devote a large part of it to the public service, by keeping up an estate without profit. However, after all the changes, I am not sure that the tillers of the soil will be, in material conditions, quite as well off as many are now who hold under the great Bedford, Devonshire, Portland, Buccleuch, and Northumberland estates. But, on the whole, the social objections to the maintenance of an indebted, idle, and exclusive squirearchy are so serious, that we should by every legal obstacle limit the formation of a landlord class whose social function is sport, and whose economic function is to spend what rent remains after keeping the estate in productive efficiency. Economically speaking, there is some social justification for dukes and millionaires as landlords, for they sometimes put almost as much on to the land as they draw off, and they offer types of high agricultural efficiency. It is the squireen, with one or two thousand acres, with no capital, no occupation, and few useful faculties, who is without any *raison d'être* ; being, like his own cherished fox, a survival of the unfittest in modern civilisation.

In what I have said I strictly limit myself to England, and to rural estates. If the system cannot be applied to English farms it fails altogether. The social and economical conditions of the greater part of Ireland, and even of Scotland, are so very different ; the social justification of the landlord there is so much less even when it exists at all, that very different reasoning applies to the ill-managed territories of so many Irish and Scotch absentee landlords. I also have been speaking exclusively of the soil in country, not in cities. I am quite prepared to see the State, through local authorities, assert in towns a permanent

right to control the disposition of the soil in such ways as experience shall prove to be most useful to the public. Abstract rights of property should no more be an obstacle to laying out our cities as health and convenience suggest, than they are now in making a railway through an estate. What we want are a set of Lands Clauses Acts applying to any soil in towns, and vesting control over it in proper local authorities. And we shall want very stringent provisions to check owners from doing anything contrary to public interests, or from receiving fanciful compensation for their own laches and obstruction.

Even then we ought to see more wisdom and honesty in local authorities before we can confidently entrust to them the work now done for the most part by great landowners. The municipalities of Paris, New York, San Francisco, or Melbourne are not model trustees of public interests; some think that even the Corporation of London and the Metropolitan Board of Works are far from all that is wanted. Is it quite certain that either of them would abolish misery and unhealthy dwellings the moment we had handed over to them the control of the Bedford, Salisbury, Portland, Portman, Grosvenor, and Cadogan estates? We may take it at least as certain that in the management of these neither fraud nor oppression is directly charged against the noble owners, other than such fraud and oppression as Mr. George finds in the act of owning land at all. To a citizen of Paris, New York, or San Francisco, accustomed to associate municipal government with bribery, rings, corners, and public plunder, such a state of things would appear an impossible utopia. Every one who knows London can see how unfounded and even ludicrous are invectives against the peers who own considerable districts in our city. Large as these estates are, they

do not account for a quarter of the area or the population. So far from these being the districts where suffering is greatest, they are altogether those in which it is least. The central, eastern, northern, and southern districts of London, where the dukes do not own a house, are those where the misery and overcrowding are the worst.

Misery and overcrowding as great, if not greater, are found in Paris, Berlin, Naples, Lyons, Rouen, New York, and Melbourne, where there are no Norman barons, no dukes owning whole quarters. Everybody knows that Mr. George's famous gates near Euston Square were set up for the convenience, not of the duke, but of the inhabitants of the quarter. They are doubtless a public nuisance, but if the soil belonged to the parish we might have a dozen more set up. This is a specimen of the rhetoric to which Mr. George treats us. Happily our English reformers do not adopt this outlandish style of reform. I am certainly no friend of landlordism as an institution, or of aristocratic social traditions; I am for radical land reform both in town and country; but justice forces me to say, that amongst our great landowners, both in town and country, are to be found those men who, of all the rich and powerful in England, I will say of all the rich and powerful in Europe, administer their estates with the greatest sense of social duty and responsibility to public opinion. And when we have got rid of them, we shall have got rid of much that it will take us a long time to replace.

On the whole, whilst we must thank the Land Nationalisation movement for directing attention to many important truths, and whilst we may heartily go along with the spirit which inspires it, we cannot accept the chimerical hopes and the blind leap in the dark which it offers us as a remedy for all industrial

evils. We should sacrifice for a mere dream all the solid results won by radical reform and practical experiments; for it would plunge us into a social revolution which might last for generations. The talk about "planting the English people on the soil" is surely mere words. However successful the plan, it could only plant about one in ten of our families on the soil. The twenty-six millions of Englishmen cannot all be planted on the soil; they are not Swiss or Norwegian woodcutters, nor are they all desirous of retiring to the country on a competence. And when they were planted on the soil, how would they live and earn a living if they have neither capital nor skill to work it? We might as well talk of planting the English people in the shops, or warehouses, or offices of England. What would they do when they got into the offices and shops without capital or business habits? A tailor presented with a cottage and ten acres would starve as quickly as a farmer would starve if presented with a lawyer's business as a going concern. There are now thousands of farms "on hand" because, rent or no rent, there is no one with capital and skill who cares to take them.

Of the State management of capital, *i.e.* of simple Communism, I say little now. We have not before us a definite statement of the views propounded by any systematic school of Communism. There are several organised bodies putting forward proposals of a more or less Communistic character; and within our generation we have seen several Socialist movements of a more or less systematic kind. In what I say now I speak of no body in particular. I shall deal with the Socialist and Communist language which is to be heard nowadays in several quarters, both within and without the publicly constituted bodies. There is not a little floating Socialism current around us. I neither

fear nor despise Communism. I am anything but opposed to its motive spirit or its aspirations. I honour its generous instincts, and I sympathise with much in its social aims; for undoubtedly some of the noblest characters of our day are in sympathy with them, and it counts in its ranks men of heroic devotion to a social ideal. Nor need we undervalue its forces and the future destiny before it.

On the continent of Europe it is already one of the mighty factors of social evolution. We shall have it here, I doubt not; though hardly in any form that is yet presented to us. But in what form, in what system, with what doctrines, is Communism presented to Englishmen to-day? The Communism which alone has ever had a serious following—the Communism of Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon, Lassalle, and Karl Marx—had a social system of some kind, a body of logical doctrines, and an ideal of human society, however vague and extravagant. But the Socialism in many quarters now preached amongst us has none of these—neither economical theory, nor social scheme, nor system of life of any kind. It offers nothing but invectives against the rich, fancy figures for its statistics, and appeals to the poor to begin a social insurrection. It has no economic, social, or political doctrines. It propounds no intelligible religious principle—no scheme of morality, of government, of institutions, of education, of domestic, industrial, or civic life.

Now no real insurrection was ever made by pure anarchists. The people must have something to believe in, to hope for, and work for, before they will seriously rise. Incitements to plunder and to destroy do not touch the people, who need some great moral cause and some ideal in view to stir them profoundly. But Communism, as presented in England,

offers no moral cause, no ideal. It has never faced, and has nothing to say about any one of the great social problems, about religion, morality, education, government, public or domestic duty. It is not Communism: it is mere Nihilism. Communism implies the systematic organisation of life on the principle of community and not of individualism. This Nihilism, which pretends to be Communism, simply proposes the confiscation of property. How the capital so confiscated is to be worked—under what moral code, by what institutions, and for what social aim—on this it has nothing to say.

How can it have? The small knots of propagandists whom we find here and there—some of them in organised societies, some in the press, the pulpit, or on platforms—seem to have no agreement about these things. Some are ministers of the Gospel; some profess materialism pure and simple; others belong to every intermediate phase of opinion. Their views about morality, education, government, and society are equally various. Now, although an economist is not bound, as such, to have any moral, religious, or educational programme, a Communist is bound; for if people are to work in common they must be trained in common. Every serious Socialist or Communist school has provided for this. The interesting part about true Communism is that it so fully realises the impossibility of production on a Communistic basis without a complete set of institutions to mould life generally on a corresponding basis.

All true Communists have seen that it is impossible to found a Communistic mode of industry without destroying private life. Hence they begin by attempting to found a set of social, family, and religious institutions to eradicate all traces of individualism. If they do not do this they know that Communism in

labour is impossible. But the various groups who in England to-day advocate some vague Communistic proposals do none of these things. They may denounce our social sores, they may call every man who does not agree with them mere *bourgeois* (to these young gentlemen even trades unionists and co-operators are all *bourgeois*—the real English workman does not even know the word *bourgeois*); but, in the absence of any social scheme, they will not penetrate the body of English workmen.

Communism in a systematic form is, perhaps, not advocated amongst us. But Communistic proposals and Socialist schemes have little meaning unless they can be placed on a logical footing. The only Communism which is worth serious notice is that complete Communism which seeks to transform all private property into Collectivism, or common property. It would be strange if English workmen, who have laboured so long and sacrificed so much in order to share with their fellows some of that security and independence which the legitimate use of property gives, and who have organised patiently such powerful agencies for checking the abuses of property, were suddenly to declare for universal confiscation in the blind chance that something might come of it. Trades unions, co-operative, building, land societies, and the rest would all disappear, for they all imply the institution of property.

The numerous associations of which we have here the delegates would have no *raison d'être*. There would be no hope of a plot of ground for the countryman, of secure tenure of a farm, of a homestead of his own for any of us. There would be no "Union" on one side and employer on the other; no personal relation between any capitalist and any labourer or any farmer. There would be but one employer, one

capitalist, one proprietor, one general manager of everything and everybody. That one would be the State. But what is the State in any intelligible sense as sole landlord, sole capitalist, sole manager? The State, we know, collects taxes and manages the army and the navy, and some persons are not satisfied with the way that these trifles are managed. But what is the meaning of the State, the possessions of which should be the aggregate capital of the kingdom, and the spending departments of which would have to pay in earnings alone a thousand millions a year to twelve millions of persons? And on what principles, by what institutions, and what machinery, is this fabulous task to be accomplished? As no one has as yet given us any intelligible answer to this problem, it will be wiser to adjourn so vast a question.

From all that I have said it will appear that, whilst I hold as strongly as any man that our industrial system is socially unjust and unsound, I look upon none of the industrial schemes I have considered as going to the roots of the question. Our industrial system is vicious, because our moral, religious, and social system is disorganised. It is impossible to regenerate industry until we also regenerate society. Trades unions, co-operation, and all the mutual benefit movements, are useful in their way, but they only touch the surface. Land confiscation could only affect a minority, and would not very clearly benefit them. Land confiscation is only a fragmentary and partial kind of Communism; and Communism itself, as we hear of it to-day, is only a more sweeping confiscation, and a fragmentary and partial kind of social disorganisation. Property is only one of many social institutions; and industry is only one of many human duties. To make property a little more common, more accessible, to check some abuses of property here

and there, may be exceedingly useful when wisely accomplished; but it cannot in itself alter human nature, life, and society. Even to abolish property, and to make a strict code for industry, is only to get rid of one social institution, and to regulate one of many human duties. To expect a millennium from any kind of partial remedy is like giving pills to cure a fever. Industry can only be regenerated by regenerating society. And society can only be regenerated by sound religion, true morality, right education, wise institutions, and good government.

The root of the matter is that we can only change the general conditions of industry by changing the spirit in which industry is carried on; and we can only gain partial and temporary improvements by mending this or that industrial institution. Whilst men as a rule pursue their own desires and interests, the strongest and the most lucky will get the best of it, and the weak and the unfortunate will be cruelly used. And such is the ingenuity of human skill and the force of self-interest, that, alter as we please the mechanical modes in which industry is arranged, the strong and the fortunate soon contrive to turn them to their own advantage. The best proof of this is to be found in Mr. George's own books, especially in his last. He shows us that the industrial evils he denounces grow to immense proportions where all the social conditions and industrial arrangements are varied, and society begins with a mere *tabula rasa*. Almost the only point in which the Pacific territories of America originally resembled England was this, that the passion of self-interest was imperfectly controlled by a sense of social duty, and in the case of the States was even abnormally stimulated. Here then, in human nature, without sufficient moral control, is the source of all this evil; and it is melancholy to see

a man of genius labouring by a set of sophisms, each more preposterous than the last, to show that its source is in property in land.

If the cause of industrial misery be traced to the passion of self-interest, and to a low sense of social duty, there might seem to be no more to be said. We should have to wait for a general improvement in civilisation. But there is more to be said. Industry has managed to develop a moral code of its own. In politics, philosophy, art, or manners, in domestic or social life, self-interest is not canonised as the principal social duty of man. In industry it is otherwise. For all industrial matters, in modern Europe and America, a moral code has been evolved, which makes the unlimited indulgence of self-interest, pushed to the very verge of liability to law, the supreme social duty of the industrious citizen. To buy cheap, to sell dear, to exhaust the arts of competition, to undersell rivals, to extend business, to develop trade, to lend on the best security, to borrow at the lowest rate, to introduce every novelty, to double and to halve business at every turn of the market—in a word, to create the biggest business in the least time, and to accumulate the greatest wealth with the smallest capital — this is seriously taught as the first duty of trading man.

Economists, politicians, moralists, and even preachers urge on the enterprising capitalist that the industrialist does best his duty by society who does best his duty by himself. Banker, merchant, manufacturer, proprietor, tradesman, and workman alike submit to this strange moral law. Almost the only class of capitalists in this island who do not as a rule accept it are, in truth, those great landlords who are the principal object of modern attack. It is assumed as beyond proof that the rapid increase of business, the great accumulation of wealth, is a good *per se*—good for

the capitalist, good for society. No account is taken of the business ruined, of the workmen thrown out of employment, of the over-production, of the useless, mischievous, rotten trade created, and of all the manifold evils scattered broadcast amongst the producers and every one within range of the work. It is enough to have made business, to have accumulated wealth, without coming within the grasp of the law.

Here, then, is the all-sufficient source of industrial maladies. We have come, in matters industrial, to treat duty to others, and duty to society, as only to be found in duty to self. If all employers were as thoughtful of the general welfare of those they employ as they are now eager to get the most out of them; if all producers were as anxious for good, sound, and useful production as they are for paying production; if those who lend money considered not only the security and the interest, but the purpose for which the money was sought; if those who develop new works thought more of the workers than of possible profits, industry would not be what we see it. In other words, the *solution of the industrial problem is a moral, social, and religious question.* INDUSTRY MUST BE MORALISED—infused with a spirit of social duty from top to bottom, from peer to peasant, from millionaire to pauper. But to moralise society is the business of moralists, preachers, social teachers; the economist has but little more to add, and his field is not here. But here I must pause. This Conference is no place for moralising or preaching; neither religion nor social science have their pulpits here. And, for myself, anything I could say I must reserve for another place.

V ·

SOCIALIST UNIONISM

(1889)

The twenty-five years that had passed since the writer's essay on Trades Unionism in 1865 (No. II. of this Part II.) had made a great change in the Labour world. The growth of Marxian Socialism in Europe reacted in England, and the energy of the Social Democratic Federation made its mark on English politics. The great Dock Strike of 1889 made the public aware of the profound change that was slowly taking place. Another twenty years has very nearly passed, and the movement has gone forward on lines much as the writer foresaw in this Essay which appeared in the Nineteenth Century *(vol. xxvi.).*

The most startling result of the new Industrial movement was seen in the enormous Liberal majority at the General Election of 1906, which placed in the Cabinet one of the prominent leaders of the Social Democrats, who had been sent to prison for his share in the Bloody Sunday riot, who led the people down Piccadilly and Hyde Park, and engineered the Dockers' Strike.

There are signs to-day of the inevitable reaction. The bourgeoisie *is getting uneasy at the sight of real Socialism in Parliament and at Elections; and the utter incoherence of Karl Marx's dogmas and the anarchic*

language of many of his noisy followers seem destined again to separate middle-class Liberalism from any present type of Labour Socialism (*1908*).

WITHIN the last few years Trades Unionism has been transformed under the influence of two main forces:—one being that profound social lever which is vaguely known as Socialism; the other being the transfer to its side of Public Opinion.

Thirty years ago, in the 'fifties, the old orthodox Economy was dominant; it received the superstitious veneration of the whole capitalist class; and it more or less overawed the leaders of the labouring class. To-day the old orthodox Economy—the Gospel, or the Sophism, of Supply and Demand, absolute Freedom for Individual Exertion, and so forth — all this is ancient history. "We are all Socialists now," cries an eminent statesman in jest or in earnest. And the jest has earnest in it, if we take Socialism to mean, not the substitution of some communistic utopia for the old institutions of Capital and Labour, but rather the infusion of all economic and political institutions with social considerations towards social ends. Thirty years ago Socialism was a mere outlandish day-dream. It is now, in the new vague sense, as a modifying tendency, a very real force. And it has killed the old Targum about Supply and Demand — the plain English of which was—"May the devil take the weakest!"

In the same way, within thirty years, the enormous power of Public Opinion has passed over to the side of Trades Unionism. In old days a great strike was invariably denounced by the combined force of the cultivated and capitalist classes. The press, the pulpit, the platform, society, and the legislature rang with menace and invective about the innate wickedness of all strikes. If here and there a clergyman, a professional man, a politician, or a writer ventured to raise a voice

on behalf of the unions, he was assailed with a storm of ridicule and abuse, and was often boycotted in his daily life. The well-known and most successful head of a certain college was almost deprived of his office by the trustees for defending the unions in public.[1]

When my name was proposed as a member of the Trades Union Commission of 1867, the appointment was hotly opposed as a dangerous precedent; and more than one eminent solicitor calmly told me that, if I consented to serve, I must expect to quit the legal profession. If we sought to justify a strike to the public, we had the greatest difficulty in getting a word into the press edgewise, and a quiet statement of the true facts was almost systematically suppressed. Trades Unionism was spoken of much as we now hear men speak of Russian Nihilism; and a strike was condemned in the same language in which men now condemn the resort to dynamite. To the last generation of the educated and employing classes, a Strike had, indeed, all the elements of a dynamite outrage. It could not raise wages one farthing; it could only increase the sufferings of its infatuated partisans; it could only annoy and embitter the capitalist; and those who abetted it were the workman's worst enemies.

Things are indeed changed now. We have just seen one of the greatest strikes on record carried to a successful issue with, and mainly by, the support and encouragement of the public.[2] The press was uniformly fair; and, very generally, aided the movement. No sooner were the docks empty than money poured into the strike fund, not only from thousands of British unions but from across the seas, and from the wealthy and the governing classes in all directions. "We

[1] How different to-day after the legislation of 1907! (1908).

[2] The Dock Strike of 1889, engineered by Mr. John Burns.

were pelted with cheques," says the treasurer, and in a few weeks upwards of £40,000 was given. No Mansion-House Fund in a great national disaster, says John Burns, could have been "responded to with more extravagant generosity." In one memorable case, at least, a great employer—Mr. Henry Lafone—himself gave strike pay to his own men, when, under a sense of social duty, they left his works empty. The Stock Exchange raised a handsome sum towards the fund in a few minutes. Merchants and merchants' clerks cheered the strikers as they passed the warehouses in the City. London saw, without uneasiness or ill-will, 50,000 men on the verge of starvation pass in procession through the streets. Politicians, clergymen, writers, and capitalists backed up their demands with word and with purse. Churches of all creeds, educational and charitable institutions, gave their help. Catholics and Salvationists, Tories and Radicals for once combined. The police for once were cheered by the East-End agitators. John Burns carried his tens of thousands up and down, like a Pied Piper of Hamelin, amidst a sympathetic world of bystanders—as of men bewitched. The very dogs of journalism forgot to bark. The East-End shopkeepers gave credit for goods. The pawnbrokers refused interest, and lodging-house keepers refused their rent. Finally a Lord Mayor, a Cardinal, a Bishop of London, and some prominent politicians, succeeded in bringing about peace in this tremendous upheaval of industry.

Cardinal Manning, whose part in this matter shows out the Catholic Church on its grandest side, a side whereon, as Ireland, Liverpool, Glasgow, and London can prove, it is perhaps as much alive as it ever was, declares that "since the Cotton Famine of the North there has been no nobler example of self-command than we have seen in the last month." "In the great

and extraordinary movement just ended," writes John Burns, "the cause of labour has been the popular cause the whole world over." "The whole East End," he adds, "rose and stood up alongside of us." "The greatest struggle between Capital and Labour that this generation of Englishmen has seen," writes Mr. Champion, "has ended in the victory of the weaker side." "It marks an epoch not merely in the history of labour, but of England—nay, even of humanity," says Lord Rosebery in his midnight address to the tram servants. And when he opens a meeting to consider the formation of a new Union, avowedly as Chairman of the London County Council, his bold and sagacious act, so full of the new spirit that animates the citizens of London, is heartily approved by all but the professional critics of the other party. Truly the days are changed for the better since a Strike was treated as a social outrage, and to advocate Trades Unions was to be marked as a "wild man."

We have just witnessed not merely the greatest and most rapidly successful strike of our time, but we have seen an epidemic of strikes. There were at one time, in August (1889), 100,000 men on strike along the riverside. Hundreds of different trades took part in it. Within a few months nearly 200 different trades, according to John Burns, have gained an advance of 10 per cent in wages with a reduction of hours. More than 100,000 new members have been enrolled in Unions. The labour problem has become a prime political interest. Statesmen, editors, churches, and leagues put labour questions in the front rank. Gas-stokers, coal-whippers, sailors, tram-drivers, women, are forming unions. The children in schools all over the country play truant in strike. Great and stubborn as were the contests maintained by the old Unionism

of the last generation, the new Unionism of to-day immensely surpasses it in extent and in energy. What is the difference?

The old ideas about Unions and strikes have been entirely reversed. It used to be an axiom that the unskilled labourers, singly, stood almost no chance at all. Yet unskilled labourers have just won in the greatest strike on record. It was a truism that no great and prolonged strike could possibly succeed without a solid Union behind it. Yet here a vast strike has succeeded without a Union; and the Union has followed, and not preceded the strike. It used to be held, that where the supply of labour is practically unlimited, the idea of a strike is rank suicide. Yet here, with the whole population of these islands whereon to draw for unskilled labour, mighty and wealthy companies have failed to fill their empty docks.

The new element is this. The trades have stood by one another as they never did before. The skilled workmen have stood by the unskilled workmen in a wholly new spirit, and public opinion supported the men as it never has done yet. In all the thirty years that I have closely studied the labour movement, I have never before known the best-paid and most highly skilled trades strike out of mere sympathy, simply to help the unskilled, where they had no dispute of their own. The skilled trades have often offered generous aid in money to other trades. But they never have struck work themselves, without asking or expecting any direct advantage for the sacrifice. In the strike of the Dock labourers the whole brunt of the struggle lay in the turn-out of the stevedores, lightermen, sailors, engineers, and other skilled men. It was a general mutiny, led and commanded by the sergeants and corporals in mass. This was the cause of the excellent discipline and rapid organisation of the strikers,

and it was also the ground of their success. Without the stevedores and other skilled officers, unskilled labour, even if it could be found, would have been useless in the Docks.

There has been, then, through the whole East End—indeed, through the whole of London and of the kingdom—a sympathetic combination of workmen more rapid and more electric than anything seen before. We have witnessed what in the Continental jargon used to be called the "solidarity of labour," or the "fraternity of workmen"—a perfectly real and very powerful force, when it can be organised and brought into practical result. It simply means the common interest of all the toiling millions to help each other towards their social improvement. Now, the old Unionism has often been charged (and not without reason) with its defects on this side. The older Unions have long been afflicted with the tendency so often remarked in religious sects which, after manfully resisting persecution in bygone times, have grown exclusive, hide-bound, retrograde, and the slaves of their own investments. Some years ago (in 1885) I ventured to point out in the Industrial Remuneration Conference (*Report*, p. 437) that in two generations Unionism has shown itself powerless to reach the residuum, or to combine the great average mass; that it tended to sectional and class interests; to divide trade from trade, members from non-members; that it accentuates the gulf between the skilled and well-paid artisan and the vast destitute residuum.

The new Unionism is a very different thing. It has welded into the same ranks skilled and unskilled: it organises the average mass and takes charge of the residuum; it has extinguished sectional interests; and it is not absorbed in contemplation of its own cash balances. Years and years ago we laboured to convince

employers that an established Union was a strongly conservative power, that it checked strikes, and often tended to prevent a rise of wages. The minority report of the Trades Union Commission, 1869 (p. xxxvi.), pointed out that the strongest and richest Unions coincide with the greatest fixity in wages and hours, and the fewest trade disputes. In 1883 I pointed out to the Nottingham Congress that the great societies for years past had not spent more than 1 or 2 per cent of their income in strikes. The permanent officials of a great Union, with an income of £50,000, and cash balances of twice or three times that amount, easily acquire the cautious, thrifty, contented, rest-and-be-thankful temper of a bank director or a City magnate. A famous old banker in Fleet Street was once told by a pushing bill-discounter of the new American type, that, by a very simple operation, he could easily add to his profits another £20,000 a year. "But I don't want another £20,000 a year," said the worthy old man. And I knew many a Unionist secretary of the old school who firmly believed that the subscribers to his society did not want the "tanner," and would do no good with it, if they got it.

Between Unionism of that type and the Socialists there has raged for some years past an internecine war. Furious accusations have been bandied about on both sides. Socialists charged the Unions with bolstering up and stereotyping the miseries of the present industrial system, by thinking more of "superannuation," "benefits," and "cash balances," than of any general improvement in the conditions of labour. Unionists charged Socialism with incoherent raving about impossible utopias, whilst doing nothing practical to protect any single trade. As usual, there was a good deal of force in what was said on both sides.

Vague rant about Capital as organised plunder buttered no man's parsnips, and did not take ten seconds off the working day. On the other hand, it was a poor consolation to the sweated waistcoat-hand to be told that the Amalgamated Engineers had a quarter of a million in the bank.

But in the course of the present year Socialism and Trades Unionism have been fused; and the new Unionism is the result. At last a *modus vivendi* has been found, with an alliance offensive and defensive for the time being. Each has contributed a special element of its own, and has allowed a good deal of its former character to drop. Socialism has contributed its dominant idea of betterment all along the industrial line, whilst borrowing from Unionism its regular organisation and practical tactics for securing a definite trade end. Unionism has contributed its discipline and business experience, whilst dropping its instinct towards mutual insurance "benefits" as the essential aim. And so Socialism for the nonce has dropped attack on the institution of Capital. The new Unions are avowedly trade societies to gain trade objects. The new Socialism is bent upon objects quite as practical as those of any Trade Union, and really the same. The joint movement may either be described as Socialism putting on the business accoutrements of a Trades Union—or as Unionism suddenly inspired with the passion and aspirations of the Socialists. The typical secretary of the old Unionism would have made a respectable branch manager of a Joint-Stock Bank. The typical leader of the new Unionism is a powerful club orator who finds himself at the head of a great political movement.

It is simple justice to acknowledge that this fusion is the work of one man. It is his work both in original conception and in practical application. He

fully grasps it in principle, and thoroughly works it out in act. Where many men, both Socialists and Unionists, have honestly given good work, John Burns is the one man who is equally prominent both as a socialist and as a unionist. Certainly no other Socialist ever raised the wages of two hundred trades within a few months. And no other Unionist ever brought 100,000 men into union in the same time. I have often myself been strongly opposed to Mr. Burns, and have been opposed by him; and I daresay the same thing will happen again. But I cannot, in justice, deny that he has been the head of the most extraordinary labour movement of our time. The recent Strike, from a simply strategical point of view, was conducted with consummate skill, surprising energy and swiftness. But the ferment and passion which gathered round it, and which is still rolling on from its impulse, is a fact far deeper and more strange. A great Strike is at best a grim, cruel, hardening tussle, even when most orderly and most justifiable; and its anti-social spirit but too often rouses aversion in the disinterested public.

The Strike of the Docks was accompanied with a moral lift which kindled sympathy throughout the English world. John Burns contrived to fire it with a sense of social duty as its key-note. He stood up again and again preaching about men's duty at home and abroad; and the singular hold which he has won over the masses is due to the sense that he is regarded more as a moral reformer than as a strike-leader. The movement, as he said himself, became more like the spread of a religion than the demand of a rise in wages. Mothers of new-born infants had them carried to him through the crowd that he might put his hand upon them to bring luck. Just so I have seen women in Italy bring their children to Garibaldi to be blessed.

My friend Mr. Broadhurst occasionally, I believe, expounds the Word, but I do not think that such an incident has ever befallen him. As orator, leader, teacher, and general in the field, John Burns has obtained amongst the workers of London an influence much like that which Gambetta had over the French peasants, and by the exercise of some of the same gifts. Whatever be his gifts, the public and the legislature will, no doubt, soon be able to test them.[1]

Right or wrong, full of promise or full of danger, as it may be, the new Unionism is a very great force. It has already produced the greatest upheaval recorded in the history of modern industry, one which a statesman of Cabinet rank has described as—"an epoch in the history of labour and of humanity." But as yet we are only in the beginning. There are not yet a million unionists in the kingdom, whilst there are ten or twelve million workers of both sexes who might be. The new trades union is a machine far simpler, easier, more rapidly organised than the old; and it can be formed *ad hoc* for any given occasion. There is thus an almost unlimited field for its activity, now that Socialists have taken to aim at practical results by borrowing the discipline and machinery of a true Trades Union.

Recent events may serve to display the incredible folly of the party who hoped to crush out Unionism at the time of the Royal Commission in 1869. They proposed compulsory legislation to divide every union fund into a separate trade fund and a separate benefit fund (*Report*, p. cxiii.). As the minority pointed out (p. lxi.) this would merely force the Unions to devote a large proportion of their resources to strikes, and take away from the Union officers the strong tempta-

[1] As Cabinet Minister to-day, successful head of a great department of State (1908).

tion to avoid disputes in order to accumulate a large balance. What the enemies of the Unions, with suicidal folly, tried to compel the societies to become, *i.e.* mere trade societies or fighting unions *per se*, that the Socialists have now induced the societies to do voluntarily, or rather they have founded new Unions to effect that object. In the same way the enemies of the Unions proposed to the legislature to make "picketing" criminal. The recent Strike has shown us the greatest development of Picketing ever known. There were 5000 "pickets" maintained night and day, over lines thirty or forty miles in extent, by land and water; and the discipline and vigilance of the *cordon* were as exact as with the Prussians at the siege of Paris. Without these "pickets" the Strike would have collapsed in a week. Yet, in spite of the great extent of the lines and the desperation of starving men, no outrage of any serious consequence was proved, and the police were not called in to interfere. If "picketing" had been made illegal in 1869, the recent Strike would have been suppressed by the resort to cavalry, as they do so constantly abroad.

A brief review of the recent Strike is not the place for a critical estimate of the new Unionism which carried the Strike through and which has developed out of it. We wait to see how the new Unionism intends to work. Its opportuneness and its strength, its dangers and temptations, are patent enough. A Union having no large weekly dues, no costly deferred benefits, and no complex voting machinery, is obviously a more handy and more rapid instrument to wield than one of the rich, endowed, conservative, mutual-insurance Unions. On the other hand, experience has shown that a mere strike society has no backbone and has no reserve fund to meet a lock-out. For years the unskilled trades have been forming temporary

unions which soon die out, become insolvent, or encourage foolish, abortive strikes. A union with a splendid balance, with benefits "up to the chin," and one or two shillings a week in subscriptions, is apt to get as timid of change as "the old lady in Threadneedle Street." A Union, which is a mere fighting Club, soon exhausts itself in defeats, and disgusts those who put their trust in its promises and who gave their money to its blunders. The permanent success of the new Unionism still remains to be proved by results; for it will depend on the judgment and self-control the new leaders can show. They have shown an energy, a swiftness, and a burning social enthusiasm which have long been unknown in the rich established Unions; and they have thereby seized a grand advantage in a favourable state of the Labour Market. But they will suffer terrible reverses, if they ever come to think that energy and fervour will avail, when the economic conditions of the Labour Market are dead against them.

What they have proved is this: and it is most important. Whereas it used to be an axiom that unskilled workers in an open trade could not form regular unions or sustain a prolonged strike, it is now shown that they can. It used to be thought that the very poor, the casual labourer, those who have no local employment (as sailors), and women, could never form a substantial union or a serious strike, because they could not afford weekly subscriptions, have nothing to fall back upon, and had not the endurance, discipline, *esprit de corps*, and patience which an obstinate struggle demands. The weakness of Unionism was, that it was only available to the skilled men in good wages, and often injured rather than helped the great unskilled mass. John Burns has lifted that reproach from it, for he has had the sagacity to see that Unionism hitherto

has been presented to the unskilled in far too costly and elaborate a form; and that to win sympathy, Unionism must take a truly social, and not a sectional, aim. If this new departure can be maintained, it amounts to a revolution in industry.

The dead-weight which for generations has pressed upon labour in London is the fact, that for some fifteen or twenty miles on both sides of the Thames there has been a floating population in irregular employment, of casual habits and migratory bent. It was like a great leak in the bottom of the ship. East London was always growing bigger, and the greater the demand for labour, the larger grew the swarm of casual labourers. The great centre of disturbance was the Docks. From the peculiar conditions of the case, and under the fierce competition of rival companies, the vast shipping business of the Port of London stimulated the accumulation along the riverside of a mass of labour under-paid, irregularly employed, immensely over-stocked, and under the incessant competition of numbers, at the mercy of the pay-master. Often and often have I heard in Unionist meetings indignant appeals against workmen "being treated like dock-labourers." It was the familiar instance of the lowest stage of industrial oppression.

A new system is now to begin. May his "tanner" benefit the dock-labourer! But of far more importance to him than his "tanner" is the mitigation of his successive hours, of the irregular turns in his labour, of all mere casual hour-work. And above all important to him is the knowledge that he can now defend himself by combination, that he is just as capable of discipline, of organised resistance, and of brotherly confidence in man to man, as is the Associated Miner or the Amalgamated Engineer. The grand result of

the Dock Strike is this :—the traditional gulf between "skilled" and "unskilled" labour has ceased. The new Unionism has fused them into one.

But the new Unionism would not have done much if Public Opinion had not gone over to its side. Thirty or forty years ago the whole weight of English literature and current opinion backed up Capital always, and opposed Labour everywhere. The Reform agitation, the Chartist movement, the year 1848, the books of Carlyle, Kingsley, Maurice, Ruskin, and the later writings of Mill, shook the orthodox gospel. But in the main the press, Parliament, and society teemed with calumny of Unionism and all its works. The great strikes of 1851-2-3 and 1858-9 produced a deep impression. But the first systematic attempt to judge Unionism fairly was made by the remarkable Committee of the Social Science Association, which published its Report in 1860. On that Committee of thirty-two may be seen the names of twelve Members of Parliament, four subsequent Ministers (including H. Fawcett, W. E. Forster, and George S. Lefevre), five civil servants of the Crown, and twelve men of letters and of science. That book was the starting-point of honest study of the practical labour problems. Then came the Royal Commission of Trades Unions in 1867-8-9, when the extravagant proposals of the economic pedants were baffled by the steady good sense and the popular sympathies of two peers—Lord Wemyss and Lord Lichfield.

Of course the transfer of political power effected in the various Reform Acts of the last twenty years has exerted a profound silent revolution. And the fact that the workmen are now the depositaries of power has forced the rich to listen to their demands with a hearing entirely new. Along with a re-casting of our whole political system into a democratic form,

there has gone during the last twenty years an immense movement in social philosophy and social politics. The Commune in France, the land struggle in Ireland, the growth of Socialism on the Continent, the teaching of Karl Marx, Henry George, Mill, Comte, and those whom each of these have influenced, have continually broken up the old economic purism, the gospel of *laissez faire* and unlimited licence to individual selfishness. Along with these have worked an immense body of organised movements, with many different schemes and with widely divergent creeds, such as the Salvation Army, Toynbee Hall, Newton Hall, the Social Democratic Federation, the Land Nationalisation Societies, and all the other agrarian movements in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England, with Guilds, Leagues, and Societies innumerable; such inquiries as those of the Industrial Conference of 1885, Mr. Charles Booth's Analysis of Labour in East London, 1889, the Trades Union Annual Congress, and all the various types of Christian Socialism that are weekly preached in Church and Chapel.

Socialism in any systematic or definite form, as a scheme for superseding the institution of Capital, has not as yet in my opinion made any serious way. At least I know of no coherent scheme for eliminating individual ownership of property which can be said to have even a moderate following of rational and convinced adherents. The enthusiasts who, here and there, put forth such schemes are not really understood by those whom they get to listen to them. But Socialism, as meaning the general desire to have all the arrangements of society, economic, legislative, and moral, controlled by social considerations and reformed to meet paramount social obligations—this kind of Socialism is manifestly in the ascendant. Such Socialism, I mean, as is found in Henry George's

powerful book called *Social Problems*, where we have his view of the problem apart from his sophistical "remedy." The old satanic gospel of *laissez faire* is dead: and, in the absence of any other gospel of authority, a vague proclivity towards Socialism comes to the front.[1]

Whatever name we give it, a settled conviction has grown up in the conscience of serious men of all schools, that society in its present form presses with terrible severity on the whole body of those who toil in the lowest ranks of labour. And from Bismarck and the Pope downwards all who bear rule, and all who teach, are coming to feel that society is in a very rotten state whilst that continues. We are all waking up to see (what many of us have been preaching for years) that it will not do, and must be mended or ended. Hence when 100,000 men along the river-side rose up to protest against their casual employment and their miserable pay, the world very generally, both of rich and poor, thought that they were right, and gave them encouragement and help. People knew something definite about the East End and London Labour. The Mansion-House Committees, the House of Lords Committee on Sweating, the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor, the Industrial Conference of 1885, the experiences of Beatrice Potter, the studies of Charles Booth and his friends, and all that for years has been said and done in Toynbee Hall, Bedford Chapel, Newton Hall, the Working Men's College, the Hall of Science, the City Temple, and a thousand platforms, pulpits, and clubs—had made men think and given them matter for thought. Public opinion has passed over to the

[1] Twenty years have made a great difference in this as in other things. But I am not disposed to make a very different estimate now (1908).

side of the labourer; and when he made his effort, public opinion helped him to success.

There are lessons enough for every one in what has just happened. The Socialist of the Karl Marx School may reflect how sterile a thing Socialism has proved all these years that it has been raving out its fierce conundrums about the wickedness of private property, and how solid are the results to be won when it consents to enter on a practical business bargain. The violent assailants of Trades Unionism may reflect that they have done nothing practical, until they resorted to Unionism themselves and adopted its familiar tactics and its well-tried machinery. The old Unionist may reflect that, in forty years past, the conventional Unionism has proved utterly powerless to effect what in a few weeks two or three prominent Socialists have done. The men who grow hoarse in declaiming about the selfishness and brutality of the middle-classes may think of the solid assistance they had from the middle-classes in sympathy and in money. And the middle-classes, who were wont to regard the East-End labourer as a feckless or dangerous loafer, may ponder on the discipline, honesty, endurance, and real heroism which, in defence of what they knew to be a just cause, so many thousands of the poorest of the poor have shown.

The Socialist with a system and the impatient reformer generally have often turned with mockery from all reliance on public opinion and from any such doctrine as "the moralisation of industry." When they have been told that—"the true socialism is this: *the use of Capital must be turned to social objects, just as Capital arises from social combination*":—when it has been preached to them that "*industry must be moralised by opinion, not recast by the State*—moralised by *education, by morality, by religion*"—the Socialist

with a system and the impatient reformer goes off with a laugh or a sneer. Well! but this is what has just happened. Public Opinion has been changed, and it has worked great results. Capital, to a certain extent, has been moralised, and Industry also has been moralised. The very poor have been taught to feel self-respect and self-reliance, to bear much for a common cause, to practise self-denial for a social benefit. The rich have been taught to listen with more sympathy to the poor, and to know themselves as responsible for the sufferings of those they employ. What has happened is a great lesson to rich and poor, to employers and employed, in the imperishable and paramount force of Social Duty in the long run. The immediate results are not very great. But it is a beginning: and much may come of it. In the meantime, the persistent appeal to the public conscience on moral and social grounds has done, what Trades Unionism *per se* has failed to do in forty years, and what all the schemes for confiscating private Capital and nationalising private property have only succeeded in hindering and delaying being done.

VI

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS SOCIALISM

(1891)

From the foundation of Positivist centres by Dr. Congreve in 1869, the writer and his colleagues had continually presented the industrial theories of Auguste Comte on the platform and the press. As President of the Positivist Committee down from the year 1879, he consistently maintained the same views in a series of lectures, and especially in the Annual Address which he invariably delivered on New Year's Day. The following Discourse was part of that given by him at Newton Hall on January 1, 1891.

It must not be forgotten that the address here printed is merely an extract; simply part of a course of propaganda which extended over more than thirty years. It is obviously a sketch—or brief summary of principles. If it be asked in what way, by what agencies, and under what religious ideal, any Moral and Religious Socialism *could be ultimately based in practice, the answer is to be found in the entire synthesis of Positivist Ethic and religion—which has been the inspiration of the writer's whole active life, and the underlying idea of this book and his other works (1908).*

It is now, I think, for the sixth year in succession that I have tried to direct attention to the growth of

Socialism in England, and I will treat it more in detail on this occasion. With the general aim and idea of Socialism, Positivists, of course, are in hearty sympathy. With almost every word of its criticism on the actual industrial condition of Europe, with its indignant rejection of the pedantic formulas of the old Plutonomy, we entirely concur. With its main principle that all material wealth is the common product of society and labour, and is never a merely individual creation, we are wholly in agreement. With its repudiation of absolute rights of Property, and its assertion of the paramount claims of Society to dispose of all that which could have no existence but for Society itself, we cordially join. Positivism is, in a large and true sense of the word, itself an organised Socialism. Its whole scheme of life, of education, and of industry is essentially a mode of socialism — but socialism with a difference. And that difference is, that Positivism is a complete, universal, and religious socialism—not a socialism limited to material products. It is a socialism founded on social science and inspired by religion.

There is no paradox in this. From the Positivist point of view, the current Socialism is essentially right in idea, so far as it goes; but it is limited and incomplete. It does not carry the idea half far enough. The Socialists around us fill the air with denunciations of the cruelty of Capital, of the disinherited state of the labourer, of the miserable pittance which his severest labour can bring. Most true! and heartily do we join in these outcries. But it is not enough. There is appalling cruelty in men and women who have no capital. Many a parent, many a child, many a neighbour, make life a burden to those whom they control or affect. Those who possess physical strength often cruelly abuse it; those who are rich only in the

love, care, and consideration which are lavished on them, cruelly waste these precious gifts. Those who have any form of power, those who have rare gifts of intellect, learning, or peculiar resources, often most selfishly hoard or squander their store.

The poor are shamefully excluded from the laden tables of the Commonwealth; but they are excluded also from education, from knowledge, from art, from cultivation, from a thousand things which those who have them prefer to keep to themselves. Selfishness, and anti-social misappropriation of the common store of humanity, are not things confined to material products; nor will any re-arrangement of material products extinguish them. The institutions and habits that cluster round our Family Life, the appliances of civilised life, the common knowledge of our generation, the arts, the sciences, the manners and courtesies of life — are equally the product of Society, as much as are factories or railways, and they are often most selfishly abused or personally misappropriated to the interest of particular individuals. The cry of the Socialist, that the material things produced by *all* should not be appropriated by the *few*, is most true. But it is only a part of the truth.

All that Socialists urge of the injustice of the social arrangements whereby, when the owner of a coal-mine sets a thousand men to dig in the pit, at the end of twenty years he has amassed a great fortune whilst the thousand men have nothing but their worn-out bodies and limbs—all this is unanswerable; it is unjust, and indeed intolerable. We are wholly with them when they cry that, come what may, it must, and shall be changed to a more humane arrangement of Society. But the Socialist puts it on far too narrow a ground when he makes the claim of the

pitmen entirely rest on *right*. It is a confused, discredited, and illusory basis is that of *right*. Legal right we know: which means simply what the dominant body in each State which controls its legislation, chooses from time to time to enact. And we know what under democratic suffrages legal rights are now in England, or in France, or in America, democratic republics as they too are. But *right*, apart from law, is a mere quicksand, torn to pieces by scores of clear reasoners, a mere rag of the silly Rousseauism of the last century.

The lecturer at the street-corner appeals to *right*, by which he means what he would like to see done. But trained minds know too well that *right* is a mere phrase to juggle with, without a shadow of sound philosophic basis, indeed without a trace of consistent meaning. If Stradivarius makes a violin; and Beethoven composes a sonata; and Joachim plays it on the instrument — what are the *rights* of Stradivarius, Beethoven, and Joachim respectively in the money which people pay to hear the performance? Every one, from a musician to a doorkeeper, would differ as to the shares of the three. And who could answer so ridiculous a question—except by saying that the rights of the instrument-maker, the composer, and the player were what each might agree to allow to the others? Just so! *rights* are an absolutely insoluble dilemma, except on the basis of free contract. And *free contract* is just the system which the plutonomists now vaunt as the eternally fair system, the system under which in England, in Scotland, in Ireland to-day, all the cruelty and oppression is done. In other words, to appeal to *right* is either to appeal to law as it is, or else to appeal to the same legerdemain of phrases, under which the most savage oppression by Capital is worked on the present system.

The relations of man to man in a highly developed society are infinitely complex, and elude everything but a sound, searching, and scientific philosophy of human nature and of the social organism. And do the Socialists of whom we hear most pretend that they have any such philosophy worthy of the name? The Socialism which we preach here does rest on such a philosophy, based on universal history, on a study of the human character, and an exhaustive survey of all the faculties and the wants of the human body and the human soul. Here we rest the claim of the labourer to a full share—not merely in that which his hands have made—but in all things which his neighbours and fellow-citizens have—their knowledge, their thought, their skill, their refinement, their wisdom and strength,—on the indefeasible *duty* of all to co-operate in the great social combination from which all they have is ultimately derived and to which they owe every faculty of their nature.

There was a memorable saying of the last generation: *Property has its duties as well as its rights.* But our view of Property is this: *The rights of Property mean a concentration of social duties.* Our Socialism rests on *Duty* not on *Right.* Duty is always plain; Right is a verbal mystification. A man can always and everywhere do his duty. He seldom can get his supposed rights without trampling on the rights of others. Men wrangle incessantly as to rights. They easily agree as to duties. The performance of duty is always an ennobling, a moral, a religious act. The struggle for rights calls out all the passions of self and of combat. The curse of humanity is selfishness, the interests, the lusts, the pride of self. And we are now told to find the blessing of humanity in constant struggle for rights—which can mean nothing but a deeper absorption in self.

Unhappily in the current language of Socialists we too often miss two important elements which enter into all products, material or intellectual, but which are usually completely left aside. These are first: the enormous part played in every product by the society itself in which it is produced, the past workers, thinkers, and managers, and the social organism at present, which alone enables us to produce at all. An ocean steamship could not be built on the Victoria Nyanza nor could factories be established on the banks of the Aruwhimi. No one in these discussions as to "Rights of Labour" seems to allow a penny for government, civil population, industrial habits, inherited aptitudes, stored materials, mechanical inventions, and the thousand and one traditions of the past and appliances of civil organisation, without which no complex thing could be produced at all. And they entirely leave out of sight posterity. That is to say, Socialist reasoners are apt to leave out of account Society altogether. And Society, that is the Social Organism in the Past plus the Social Organism of the moment, is something entirely distinct from the particular workmen of a given factory or pit, and indeed has interests and claims quite opposed to theirs. Society, which Socialists ought to be the very last to forget, is the indispensable antecedent, and very largely the creator, of every product.

A second element in production which is left out of sight is the material, plant, and capital employed in the product, the organisation of the entire business, and the mental creation of the common work. We often hear capital and plant spoken of as if they grew in the fields, or fell down from the sky, or as if they were mere bits of luxury, like a park or a yacht, which rich men were bound to lend to poor men who want them. But who made capital, or plant, or

factories, or yards, and docks, ships, and engines, but other working men who have to live out of their labour, and who cannot transfer the results of their labours without securing their own livelihood? Socialists talk as if the yarn spun in a cotton mill was entirely produced by the labour of the spinners; and they say the mill and the machinery ought to belong to the State. But the mill and the machinery are the result of the labour of many more men than the spinners, working many years. The capitalist (so called) is simply the man who has advanced them their means of living all this time. Suppose the vampire capitalist suppressed. How is the State going to support the builders and engineers and pitmen, who build the mill and forge the machinery and dig the coal, except by taking half the wages from the spinners as taxes? This seems an odd device for increasing the wages of the workmen.

Again. Who made the cotton-spinning business? Who created the complex trade relations without which the mill would stand idle for want of orders? Who calculates quantities, profits, prices, rise and fall of markets, and the intricate and delicate organisation of a paying concern? Who but the mill-owner or his predecessor in title, and one or two skilled experts trained from childhood to this very difficult work. Socialist lecturers sometimes say, "Of course, the rights of management will be guaranteed." But this is a very off-hand way of shunting the question. The mills which cover the bare hillsides and glens of Lancashire and Yorkshire, the docks of Liverpool, or of London, the pits of Durham and Northumberland did not grow, and sink themselves. They were as completely created by the genius and resolution of particular men as the locomotive was invented by Stephenson or the art of printing by Gutenberg.

Management indeed! That is a ridiculously easy way of putting it. You cannot hire a manager for these things. A great business needs its general as completely as an army. The battle of Waterloo would never have been won without Wellington. Nor would St. Petersburg have existed without Peter the Great, nor Berlin without Frederick. Imagine Prussians or Russians hiring a manager to create their nation or found their capital.

In all these discussions men too often forget altogether the indispensable part of the organising mind—without which most undertakings would never exist at all, or would be doomed to failure. The continual disasters, and at best the very trifling success of those undertakings which in the last thirty years have been started and carried on by the workmen themselves, form the best evidence of this. And the one or two cases in which a perceptible profit has been made are those in which the market already existed, and the whole conditions of the trade were simple and notorious. There is no case on record of a body of workmen creating a new market, or founding an original enterprise.

Still more completely forgotten is the moralising power of capital when it is directed under real social impulses and in a spirit of genuine social obligation. The best and most useful qualities called out in human nature are incapable of acting without freedom in the disposal of material power in some form, and some kind of authorised appropriation of material things:—limited and modified it may be, but not entirely suppressed. The domestic life of the simplest family would be impossible, if they had not even a room they could call their home, not a bit of furniture, not a picture, or a book, not a chair, nor a bed, which they could reasonably expect to occupy the next day. No

man could feel himself a free and independent citizen if he could not call his boots, or his shirt, or his hat his own; no man could work at his best, if he could not look to keeping the same set of tools in his own bag.

If room, bed, plates, cups, knives and forks, clothes, tools, books, and every material thing were served out to citizen No. 7695, every morning from the public stores, men would feel themselves in a prison or a barrack, and the noblest and most powerful qualities of citizenship would be destroyed. If no man could look to reap the corn which he had sown, or to plough next year the same field which he farmed last year, no practical farming could be done at all, and the farmer would feel himself to be a slave or a convict. What is it that forces all reasonable Socialists to-day to accept appropriation for all such domestic and personal concerns, though obviously on the strict theory of Socialist right a man has no more right to a bed, or a cot which he did not make, but bought in the market, than a capitalist has to a mill, or a ship, which he bought and did not make? On the abstract theory of rights, that things only belong to those who make them, a man's coat belongs not to him, but to the farmer who grew the wool, and the weaver who made the stuff, and the tailor who cut it out and sewed it together. We know that no reasonable Socialist pushes abstract theory so far. That is to say, reasonable Socialists surrender the doctrine of *rights*, for the sake of social convenience and by mere force of human nature.

It is a question of degree where the line of appropriation is to be drawn. Every one agrees that, if all kinds of appropriation of capital were absolutely barred by law, society would soon revert to a state of primitive barbarism. We can all see that appropria-

tion of home, of domestic appliances, of clothes, books, tools, of farms, workshops and the like, is indispensable to the best activity of human life. Most Socialists would add some stock of money or money's worth, for few would be ready to face so complete a barrack system, that a man would have to apply to the board for an order, if he wished to change his house, or take his family for a holiday. Here, we are prepared to carry the principle further, and say:—that limited and qualified appropriation of farms, of mills, of factories, of ships and the material instruments of production is not only indispensable to anything like adequate production, but is alone the means of calling out the exercise of the finest forces of human nature, of activities without which life would be mean and dull indeed.

In the shameful misuse of Capital which is so common around us, and in the cynical selfishness with which the rights of Capital are usually asserted, we hear nowadays incessant outcries about the crimes of Capital, and next to nothing about the indispensable services of Capital to Society. The outcry is indeed abundantly justified. But the services which Capital renders to Society are quite as real and quite as far-reaching; though Capitalists themselves are usually too blind or too arrogant to assert them, and though, in the obsequious deference that we now show to the popular cry of the hour, few social reformers will venture to murmur a good word for the social utility of Capital in principle. Indeed, unless Capital can show itself in a more social attitude, or unless social philosophy can prove its necessity on better grounds than those of the obsolete laws of Plutonomy, it is far from impossible that the institution itself may be shaken to its foundations, and suffer a temporary dissolution. If it cannot reform itself in time, that is

perhaps the only thing that could happen. The institution will of course reconstruct itself rapidly again, and it may be hoped on broader foundations and with a nobler spirit. But in the interval, frightful disasters would be the portion of our complex industrial system; widespread misery to the point of starvation would befall our people; and a staggering blow would be delivered to the intellectual, material, and moral progress of civilisation.

Capitalists themselves are usually unconscious of the immense benefits which they really confer on society, whilst they imagine themselves to be exerting nothing but thrift, prudence, and honourable ambition. Without the energy and ability which only can secure industrial success, the undertakings they direct would be disastrous failures, and workmen would everywhere be thrown out of employment. Without the passion for accumulation which makes a capitalist what he is, products would be consumed as fast as they were made, and no accumulation would exist. Without accumulation, society would come to a standstill, and at the first turn of bad times or a succession of bad seasons, the people would everywhere be deprived of the means of living. We hear much about the immense profits which Capitalists make; but no one ever speaks of the enormous drains on capital which in bad times they bear in silence.

The working masses know nothing about these huge, prolonged, and alarming losses, which the capitalist himself is too prudent to disclose to any one but his lawyer and his banker. He struggles on with courage and tenacity, as if he were making a profit; and often as not, he saves the ship at last. In the meantime his workmen are being paid, sometimes year after year, out of the accumulated savings, just as if the business were still running at a profit. If there

were no capitalist, and the concern were managed by public meetings of those who work in it, the following results would arise (1) The profits in good years would be consumed as they were made, and no accumulation to speak of would be formed; (2) the instability of management by meeting would lead to speedy ruin; (3) the publicity involved in public management would be destructive to business; (4) in bad years, the workers in meeting assembled would never submit to the reduction in salaries required to meet losses, and would never have the tenacity to face a long succession of losses and reduction: a panic would arise, and the business would be broken up.

If the "business" were the property of the State, and if the management were that of a Government department, what is there to show that it would be managed more liberally than the Dockyards, Government factories, or the Post Office, in all of which we hear the loudest outcries of tyranny, which are often said to be types of Public Sweating? Socialism involves, in order to give it a fair chance, an entire reconstruction of our whole social system and all our principles of public life. Quite so. That is our point. Socialism offers no such fundamental social regeneration. Positivism does. And by the time the social reconstruction is effected, it will be found that anti-Capitalist Socialism is no longer needed.

Capital acts as a reservoir does, which in seasons of drought keeps a city supplied with water till the streams begin again to flow. It is created by the peculiar aptitude for management shown by a few individuals having a genius for that kind of work. It is maintained by the passion for accumulation urging special natures to submit to great efforts and to resist immediate temptations. But this genius for business, this instinct of accumulation, and this dogged tenacity

of purpose are comparatively rare. Ninety-nine in every hundred have not got these qualities, or have not got them in special degree and in due combination. The hundredth man is a born capitalist, or manager of capital; and, as surely as a born painter will paint and a born singer will sing, he will accumulate and maintain the accumulations, if you offer him the chance and give him a free hand. But to suppose that you can hire him to do this work at so much a week, or for board, lodging, and clothing, without pocket-money or luxuries of any kind, is a foolish and ignorant assumption. Nor is it less foolish to suppose that he will do his work as well, if you do not give him a free hand at all, but have him up before the "Board" or the shareholders, and give him his orders week by week, as if he were merely your managing clerk.

It is commonly said that the example of Railways, Banks, and other Joint-Stock concerns proves that it is quite possible to carry on vast business affairs on the collective principle, with elected managers and hired agents. There cannot be a more transparent sophism. These joint-stock concerns are not carried on or managed by those whom they employ, and to whom they pay weekly wages. The directors are not workmen; they have no interests other than those of the shareholders; both directors and shareholders all belong to the capitalist class, not to the labouring class. The whole of the shareholders, without exception, belong to the few who have capital, and whose habits are all those of the capitalist order. They were all bred more or less to business. And they practically trust the interests of the concern to a very few selected directors, usually men of great wealth, who are also professional experts. Not a single person to whom the Company pays wages, has a voice in the management, either directly or indirectly. And the

whole concern is carried on by a few picked capitalists, in whom a larger group of capitalists are satisfied to place implicit confidence. The consequence is that the Bank of England, a Railway, or a Steamship Company, is carried on exactly in the same way as the firm of Rothschild, Cunard, or W. Whiteley. What is the analogy between the management of a Joint-Stock Company by a selected Board of Capitalists, and the management of a Railway by its own drivers, stokers, guards, and porters ; or of an Ocean Shipping line by its own seamen, firemen, shipwrights and labourers ? There is no analogy at all.

The Socialist theory implies that business concerns are to be carried on or controlled by those who do the manual work, not by men specially trained to great affairs. Does any rational man imagine that the stokers and navvies employed on a Railway are likely to keep down their own wages in order to provide funds for new stock five years hence ; that a body of ten thousand men, three-fourths of whom cannot keep half-a-crown in their pockets, are going to think of the next generation ; or that they are likely to trust the "Board" in the way in which the Chatham and Dover shareholders trust Mr. J. S. Forbes and have made him dictator for life ?

Working men accustomed to the simple operations of their own particular craft are prone to imagine the conduct of a business to be an easy matter ; and when they manage a co-operative store for the supply of bacon, flour, and jam, they are told by some silly friends that they have proved their fitness to direct masses of accumulated capital. It is a pitiable delusion. The success of a club to buy food for the members at wholesale prices can prove nothing of the kind. They are producing nothing for the public market, nor are they competing with individual capitalists at

all. The direction of a large trading or manufacturing concern requires powers of will, of decision, of insight, of intuition, only given to some men out of many, and only brought to perfection by the training of a life. The qualities required in a successful man of business are somewhat like those required by a successful general in the field. And it would be as idle to expect that Armstrong's Gun Factory, the Great Western Railway, or Cunard's Packet Line could be successfully run by public meetings of the founders, stokers, sailors, or labourers they employ, as it would be to expect that Wellington's campaigns could have been won by councils of war elected by universal suffrage throughout his army.

The scheme of Socialism implies something quite different from management by a "Board." A "Board," such as we know, consists of capitalists, and they do not divide profits amongst themselves. Unless workmen employed at daily wages are to have control of the profits, Socialism can mean nothing. Its proposal is to put the distribution of the profits into the control of the manual workers alone. What then would happen? The workers, who have no formed habits of accumulation (for, if they had, they would not be workmen), would divide amongst themselves the utmost possible farthing of profit. The concern would be left without due reserves, and the growth of capital would be arrested. When Socialists talk of the "State," they mean nothing but the decisions, from day to day, of the masses of workmen in democratic assemblies.

The gain *per contra*, we are told, would be that the sums now personally consumed by the capitalist would be saved. It is quite true that many capitalists—let us say most capitalists—in the absence of any real control, social, moral, or religious—do now selfishly

and shamelessly consume disproportioned shares of the profits. Their reckless egoism may yet ruin the very institution of property itself; and it certainly forms the greatest danger by which property is threatened. But, however morally evil and publicly scandalous their selfish ostentation may be, it is not socially so injurious as it looks at first sight. Even wanton luxury in personal expenditure by a large employer of industry consumes but an insignificant part of the gross returns of his business; and it forms often but a trifling fraction of what he pays in weekly wages. A large employer consumes, we will say, £5000 per annum, when he pays in wages at least £100,000. If the whole of his expenditure were devoted to increase wages, they would only be raised 1s. in the pound. The workman who receives 20s. would then receive 21s. And as things now stand, we know too well where the extra shilling would go.

Against this must be set the prospect that, on the Socialist theory, not one man, but at least a thousand, would be tempted to consume the profits year by year "up to the hilt"; and that, it must be allowed, for the best of all reasons—to provide bread for their children. As a body, they would be without the intense passion for accumulation which makes a man a capitalist, and without which no business could be carried on long. The world sees the wanton and selfish expenditure of which capitalists are too often proud. But it sees nothing of the silent indefatigable accumulation which goes on alongside of the waste. Now the accumulation on the whole is far more extensive and of more importance than the waste. It is very often made under intensely selfish motives: but society gains equally, whatever be the motives.

Under the present system of Capital, accumulation is secured, be it well or ill, and usually it is not well.

It is perhaps true that the accumulation is far too rapid, too spasmodic, and often ill judged. It ought to be an accumulation far more regular, more cautious, and more open to general social aims. But it is secured. And accumulation is the condition precedent of social wellbeing and of civilisation itself. But, under the Socialist scheme, all accumulation would be left to depend on the votes of those who, *ex hypothesi*, have no turn for accumulation at all, who under the pressure of daily needs could not be induced to provide for the future, who have no training in business, and who would be open to all the motives which are wont to play upon popular impatience.

Under such a state of things, we may look forward to an industrial chaos and material collapse, such as Europe has not seen since the Early Middle Ages. A stoppage of necessary accumulation would mean what the absence of all reservoirs would mean in a season of drought. Production would everywhere be paralysed; business would cease; and consequently wages would not be paid. It is difficult to see how famines on a gigantic scale could be averted. For, even if the property of the rich were confiscated and divided, it would not feed millions of workmen. The parks, mansions, furniture, hot-houses, gardens, horses, and carriages of the capitalists would neither feed nor clothe the poor; and in the midst of a universal material crash, they would be neither useful nor saleable. At present, our thirty millions of people buy food from abroad with the cotton, iron, coal, ships, woollens, and so forth which they make or raise. They cannot make cotton, iron, ships, and so forth as men can dig up potatoes, nor without enormous accumulated funds to provide them with costly machinery, and to pay the wages during the long interval that must elapse between digging up

the coal in the pit and the receipt of payment from the foreigner for the manufactured iron. And if the workmen, in deference to a specious theory, choose to destroy the very sources of accumulation, the inevitable result must be—a prolonged era of starvation, quite appalling in its severity and in its extent.

There remains all the wide field of the intolerable personal tyranny which any scheme of Socialism inevitably involves. We hear little now on this side of the question ; because the elaborate codes for the regulation of human life, so common in the early years of the century, have long become obsolete and forgotten. The despotism of Socialism does not so much alarm people now, simply because Socialism now is presented in a thoroughly vague and inorganic form. If, as was said half in jest and half in earnest, "we are all Socialists now," it is also true that Socialism now means anything or everything. Many people fancy they are Socialists when they only desire to see some well-meant Bills for the protection of workmen passed by Parliament. Legislation about hours of labour, the State purchase of railways and docks, model farms and lodgings maintained by taxes, and the like—all this is a mere playing at Socialism. I read through that æsthetic but hazy work called *Fabian Essays*, without finding more than half-a-dozen really Socialist proposals, or more than one real Socialist writer.

But if Socialism is to reorganise Industry, it must mean the systematic, stern, and universal suppression of private capital and wealth by law. There is one eccentric apostle of this creed, who seems to combine with it the suppression of the Family, and of most other institutions of civilised man. If Socialism is really to regenerate industry, it must abolish capital, wages, property in all forms, and it can only do so by law. The serious Socialists, of times when Socialism

was not an æsthetic fad, but a Social Gospel of consuming passion, all devised elaborate schemes for forcing men's lives into cast-iron formulas, in order to keep capital in the state of a proscribed and illegal institution. They were quite right. Unless capital be sternly and universally suppressed by law, unless the family life, the personal life, the social life of all citizens equally be prescribed by law, as Lycurgus, Babœuf, Fourier, and Owen projected it, Capital will maintain itself and make Socialism a mere impracticable experiment. If there is to be Socialism at all, serious enough to recast the conditions of labour, it must be an inexorable scheme of legal compulsion: affecting us all in our homes, in our social habits, and in the entire disposal of our personal life.

What an appalling prospect of tyranny does this open to the vision! The development of man's individual capacities, the moral beauty of domestic life, the progress of science, of art, of learning, of religion—all depend on a due measure of individual freedom. But individual freedom is absolutely dependent on the free command of a certain amount of individual capital. A man can now devote himself to a long career of unremunerative study, by reason that he or his parents may have accumulated enough to maintain him in comfort. An artist can work out ideas which the public has not learned to value, by reason that a few rich men give him a fancy price for pieces that they like. A man can devote himself to politics, to education, to religious, social, or moral reformation, because he has just enough income to dispense with daily toil at a trade. The whole progress of civilisation lies there:—inventions, learning, art, poetry, philosophy, reformation.

Suppress capital and place all accumulations not at the free disposal of individuals, but at the mercy of

meetings or boards of labourers, and what chance would there be of a student, a poet, or a moralist obtaining an order for free living? Let us imagine Charles Darwin, Alfred Tennyson, Burne-Jones, or Thomas Carlyle appearing before the department of education to ask for a dispensation from labour, in order to devote themselves to biology, poetry, painting, or letters! They would be driven out of the Board-room as idle malingerers. It is sometimes suggested that the student, the artist, or the teacher would be duly supported by the public appreciation of their merits; so that a popular painter or writer would immediately receive a state pension. That is to say, that art, science, literature, and education would pass into the hands of those who best could hit the passing fancy of the untrained public of the day.

It is quite needless to enlarge on the myriad forms of tyranny which true Socialism implies, because Socialism now presents itself only in a disguise which might serve as a costume for a Court Ball. Our attention is not called to the despotism of life that true Socialism involves, simply because there is now hardly any true Socialism before us. But it is not the less true that Property, or personal appropriation of Capital, is the sole condition of personal freedom. It is quite true that the freedom is now brutally and cynically abused by the Capitalist, but it remains true all the same, and is an eternal axiom of human society:—*without personal appropriation there can be no personal freedom.*

It must also be remembered that, in the scheme of Socialism, the humblest workman would feel the despotism of the State quite as much as the great capitalist whom he is to depose. The poorest workman to-day has a certain amount of freedom before him, when he has got his week's wages in his pocket. But under a strict system of Socialism, he would not

be free to change his home, or his residence, or his trade, or dispose of his children, as he chose. The simplest detail of his life would have to be fixed by order of some Board. Why? Because a man can do nothing freely without some sort of accumulation. And, if you suppress all accumulation, you render a man as helpless as a slave. If you suppress accumulation on principle you must suppress all accumulation —even £5 in a workman's pocket.

Thus, then, we come to the conviction that Property, like Family, like Government, like the separation of professions and functions, is a permanent, essential, indispensable element in all civilised societies. It has been cruelly perverted and abused; it has worked an enormous amount of evil; it has aroused a great force of just indignation by its misdoings. The real answer is not its annihilation; but its reformation: its complete regeneration by moral and religious, and not by mechanical and legal agencies. Governments also have frightfully abused their powers. But only Anarchists ask us to abolish government, rather than to control it. The problem of the future is to change the mode in which capital shall be used, not the persons by whom capital shall be held. Appropriation, in truth, is the condition antecedent of all civilisation.

Limited and qualified appropriation, I say. For we entirely agree that the unlimited and unqualified appropriation which now passes current as property in Capital, is an anti-social, inhuman, and barbarous form of tyranny. Limited by whom? Qualified by what? Limited by the whole force of public opinion, by law, and by the voice of the commonwealth expressed in a thousand modes! Qualified by religion, and a really social education, by the rise of a new morality, and by a set of social institutions which will impress on the conscience the paramount sense of duty from the

cradle to the grave. These modes of economic reform, these types of Socialism, offer no new resources from religion—no education, no moral scheme, no social institutions whatever. They rely exclusively on bare redistribution in the material things, on a simple re-adjustment in the right to capital. The real evils are moral, social, religious, and only partly material. The deeper source of the suffering, cruelty, and oppression about us lies in human selfishness—selfishness which takes as many forms as Proteus, which is as subtle as the serpent that beguiled our first parents; and which is able to elude a thousand laws. How are we going to cure or mend human selfishness? For if we leave this rampant, new laws, and bare material reforms, and the shifting the limits of appropriation, can have but a passing or doubtful result.

Our answer is plain. We believe that selfishness can be cured only by Religion—by a social religion, the aim of which is not to land the believer in Heaven but to reform human nature upon earth. Religion has never fairly set itself to that direct object, though incidentally it has done much to promote it, often without intending it, and sometimes in spite of its own dogmatic precepts. Once make religion the dominant force in human life, make the sole business of religion to moralise men, to control self-interest and to purify society, and we shall have a power equal to cope with all extant forms of human selfishness. Those who mock at our hopes that this, after all, is the only remedy against social oppression, have but little true sense of the enormous power of a really social religion. Even in its forms of fictitious abstraction and celestial dreams, Religion has been strong enough to conquer some of the deepest vices of our imperfect nature, and to stimulate the development of the sublimest virtues.

If the tribal God of Israel, or the mythology of Greece and Rome, could call out such great qualities in the Hebrew, the Greek, the Roman race; if the passion for godliness in Paul and his companions could overcome the lust and frivolity of the ancient world; if the Catholic discipline at its best could so deeply transform the ferocity and turbulence of mediæval Europe, we need not doubt the power of a truly social Religion to subdue the, certainly less desperate, evils of modern industrial life. Human nature and society both have a subtle and complex unity, and are only to be radically regenerated by a complete treatment of their needs as wide as human nature and society themselves. We must regenerate domestic life, personal life, moral life, social life, political life, religious life, and not manufacturing and trading life alone.

We need a reformed education, resting on a scientific philosophy, revised and purified domestic manners, a new series of social institutions, a reformed and new commonwealth. But above all we need a reformed Religion—social in its origin, in its object, and in its methods; human, practical, and scientifically true. The religion of Humanity affords us all this, and will prove equal to the mighty task of regenerating even our corrupt industrial system, for it will have a double aspect: the one spiritual, the other material, but both entirely human and real. It will be on one side of it a social religion: on the other side of it a religious Socialism.

THE END

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